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144

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

IN THE

ASIATIC PROVINCES OF TURKEY.

1887.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Administrative Reforms in the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey.

No. 1.

Sir W. White to the Earl of Iddesleigh.—(*Received January* 1, 1887.)

(No. 649.)

Constantinople, December 22, 1886.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship a copy of a despatch which Mr. Vice-Consul Barnham has addressed to me from Van on the 7th instant on the subject of the Nestorian Christians brought to his notice by their Patriarch.

I shall instruct Sir Alfred Sandison to call the attention of the Sublime Porte to these alleged grievances, but I cannot help observing that it is a pity that the Nestorians have not got, like other Christian communities in this Empire, their own Representative at Constantinople to look after their interests.

The Ottoman Government very naturally objects to any foreign Power assuming the Protectorate of any special race or community of Turkish subjects, and it is a delicate matter, and one of a kind in which it is not desirable that either our Consuls or Her Majesty's Embassy should assume a system of regular interference. I have therefore recommended Sir Alfred Sandison to allude to this case with considerable reserve, and quite exceptionally.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Vice-Consul Barnham to Sir W. White.

(No. 26.)

Van, December 7, 1886.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency a very vital grievance of the Nestorian Christians which was brought to my notice by their Patriarch during my visit to Kochannes. Several of the villages and isolated churches, of which they held undisputed possession previous to the establishment of Ottoman rule in the Hekkiari, have since, by legal forms, but in violation of every principle of justice, been claimed by and ceded to certain influential Kurds in the neighbourhood. This process of spoliation is proceeding, and the unfortunate people are now involved in hopeless litigation before the Courts of Van to assert their rights.

With your Excellency's permission, I will endeavour, by a brief reference to the past history of the Hekkiari, to explain how this state of things has arisen.

About thirty-five years ago that part of the Hekkiari which is now described by the Cazas of Hamidié, Elbak, Gevver, and Julamerik, was the domain of a powerful Kurdish Chief named Nouroullah Bey. His power was absolute over the Kurds of his district, and over those of the Nestorian Christians whose villages were open to attack. It was his practice to reward his servants and gratify his favourites by

assigning to them the tithes to be collected from the Nestorian villages, a practice which prevails in Persia at the present day. In doing so, however, he conferred no permanent title to the ownership of those villages.

When his authority was replaced by Turkish rule, Commissioners were sent out at various times by the Pasha of Hekkiari with orders to define the ownership of property throughout the new province, on the principle that those who could show a prescriptive right to their holdings should be confirmed therein by receiving title-deeds ("tapou") in the ordinary way.

In the Caza of Gevver the ownership of the village lands was decided as far back as the year 1859. The history of the proceedings which then took place is somewhat to the following effect: An officer, charged by the Governor of Hekkiari, proceeded to Gevver, where he was at once received by the wealthier Kurds, who, being aware of the object of his mission, treated him with lavish hospitality, and loaded him with presents, the result being that the Commissioner never failed to gratify them, by endowing them with any ill-fated Nestorian village they chose to ask for. Then a course of persecution followed which led the illagers to abandon their homes, which either passed into the hands of the Kurdish peasants or fell into ruins.

The following villages, some of which I have visited, have met with this fate: Allasi, containing the remains of a fine church, one hour from Dizzé (the chief village of the district of Gevver), is in ruins and abandoned. Bajergiah, half-an-hour from Dizzé, was twenty years ago entirely Christian. It now contains thirty houses inhabited by Kurds, and its church is in ruins. Oghreeshé is a village formerly Nestorian, but now almost entirely Kurdish. In this case the title-deeds were actually made out in the names of the villagers, but were stolen by four Kurdish Aghas, one, Hadji Ibrahim, of Julamerik, and three natives of the village of Kharwata. These latter caused fresh title-deeds to be made out in their own names. The same people have by like means possessed themselves of the village of Darawi, which was formerly entirely Christian, but now is half occupied by Kurds.

In the Caza of Julamerik the title to the village lands was decided fifteen years ago. At the request of the Administrative Council of Julamerik, most of whose members were influential native Kurds, the notorious Sheikh Hamid, of Bashkala, referred to in Major Clayton's Reports,* was appointed Commissioner.

Yielding to the same effective treatment as the Commissioner of Gevver, Sheikh Hamid made the following awards: The Nestorian village of Sillun was given to a Kurd of Julamerik named Khanesh. Those of Shimooncenis and Oorid were given to one Hassan Agha, of the same place. In the case of two villages named Khardalanis and Khargil, the title-deeds appear to have been seized, in one case by Temir Bey, of Gevver, in the other by Hadji Ibrahim, of Julamerik.

Lastly, with regard to three villages, Ispin, Kotrannes, and Akhwannes, no title-deeds have as yet been issued, but their case is now under litigation in the Courts of Van, the claimant being a certain Maladurun Oghlou, Aziz Effendi of Bashkala, who pretends that the villages were given to his father by Nouroullah Bey aforementioned.

The Cadi of Julamerik gave a sentence in favour of Aziz Effendi with regard to these villages. One of the allegations upon which this sentence was based was to the effect that the villagers had paid rent to the claimant for several years past, thus showing that they recognized his title. As this was utterly untrue, Mar Shimoun caused representations to be made to the Vali on his arrival at Julamerik.

The Vali questioned the Cadi before the Medjliss, and being taken by surprise, both the Cadi and members of the Medjliss confessed that they knew it to be false. The Vali charged the Cadi with perjury, and, I understand, reported the matter to Constantinople.

The villagers, however, will not obtain justice at Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

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* No. 30, December 24, 1879.

No. 2.

Sir W. White to the Earl of Iddesleigh.—(*Received January* 1, 1887.)

(No. 653.)
Constantinople, December 27, 1886.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship a despatch from Mr. Consul Henderson, in which he states that his Excellency Shakir Pasha has temporarily assumed the reins of Government, consequent on the departure of his Excellency Djemil Pasha to the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 2.

Consul Henderson to Sir W. White.

(No. 34.)
Aleppo, December 15, 1886.

Sir,

ON Wednesday last Shakir Pasha suddenly and unexpectedly arrived from Damascus with a very large military escort, and at once took command of the troops, changed the officers in charge of the various military guard-houses stationed throughout the town, and withdrew the military from the serai and prisons.

On Saturday afternoon, in accordance with telegraphic orders from the Grand Vizier, he assumed the government of the vilayet, and as soon as he had done so the military band was brought from the barracks to the serai and ordered to play before the prison, where an enormous concourse of people soon assembled, attracted by a proceeding so unusual. Djemil Pasha was invited to go to his private residence, and Saïb Bey, Shakir Pasha, and the Procureur-Général opened the doors of the prison where the Mussulman Notables were confined, and told them that by the Sultan's orders they were liberated.

The crowd remained passive spectators of this scene till Abbedine Bey, an aged man, belonging to one of the oldest families of Constantinople, was seen issuing from prison, supported by Saïb Bey, both weeping like children, when the shrill screams with which the Arab relieves his pent-up feelings burst from all parts of the crowd, and a rush was made to kiss Saïb Bey's hand.

Such an ovation has never been seen in Aleppo, and I believe the suggestion, that the band should play before the prison in order to attract a crowd to publicly witness this act of justice on the part of the Sultan did not emanate from the Aleppo authorities. An immense sensation was undoubtedly created, and it was well that Djemil Pasha had been sent to his private residence before this *coup de théâtre* was enacted.

It would seem from the secrecy of Shakir Pasha's movements, the rapidity of his journey, the precautions used to prevent Djemil Pasha's obtaining any hint of his departure for Aleppo, and the very large escort which accompanied him, that the Porte feared Djemil Pasha might cause trouble if the news of his removal from Aleppo transpired before the military command was placed in other hands. A rumour was in circulation that some one would come from Damascus, but Nashed Pasha refused to reply to Djemil's telegram demanding information on the subject.

To allay suspicion, Shakir Pasha went to Beyrout and embarked in the steamer for Constantinople, but landed at Tripoli, and from thence came overland to Aleppo, picking up at Hama a large cavalry escort from that garrison, which was awaiting his arrival.

Djemil Pasha declined the appointment of Vali of the Hedjaz, and requested permission to go to Constantinople.

This has been refused, and he has received peremptory orders to quit Aleppo within twenty-four hours, and, I understand, leaves to-morrow.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. HENDERSON.

No. 3.

Consul Jago to the Earl of Iddesleigh.—(*Received January* 10, 1887.)

(No. 6.) *Jeddah, December* 25, 1886.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of my despatch of this day's date to Her Majesty's Ambassador at the Porte, reporting change of the Governor-General of the Hedjaz in connection with His Highness the Grand Shereef of Mecca.

I have, &c.
(Signed) THOS. S. JAGO.

Inclosure in No. 3.

Consul Jago to Sir W. White.

(No. 29.) *Jeddah, December* 25, 1886.

Sir,

IN previous correspondence addressed by me to Her Majesty's Embassy during the last three years, I have had the honour to report upon the strained relations existing between His Highness the Grand Shereef and Osman Pasha, Civil and Military Governor-General of the Hedjaz, owing to the assumption by the latter of most of the hereditary administrative prerogatives hitherto enjoyed by the former as Prince of Mecca.

The Sultan seems to have done his utmost to reconcile the two parties, and lately dispatched his Chamberlain, Hussein Bey, to Mecca.

Things, however, came to such a pass, that it became evident that one or the other would have to be replaced, and about two months ago the Grand Shereef brought matters to a crisis by quitting Mecca for Medura with his entire household, openly expressing his determination never to return to Mecca so long as Osman Pasha remained as Vali.

Hussein Bey's Reports to the Sultan seem to have convinced His Majesty that some change was necessary, and, accordingly, Djemil Pasha, Vali of Aleppo, has been appointed in the place of Osman Pasha, who goes to Aleppo.

It now remains to be seen whether Djemil Pasha will be better able to manage the susceptibilities of the Grand Shereef, and to reconcile his pretensions with the interests of the Sultan, by allowing the practical resuscitation of a dual authority in the country. It may, however, be doubted whether he will be found more pliable than his predecessor in matters touching the Sultan's authority in the Hedjaz, and people profess to look forward to the ultimate removal of the present Grand Shereef and his replacement by Abdillah Pasha, his brother, long resident at Constantinople, who, besides being popular here, is said to be more subservient to Turkish views.

Osman Pasha, who goes to Aleppo, has been here five years. Prior to his appointment he held no administrative position, and his services in the Hedjaz, a province without a revenue and practically a desert, has given him no experience in administrative details.

He is a liberal-minded man, energetic, hard-working, and with the plenary powers he has been permitted to wield has done much towards the consolidation of the Turkish power in the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. S. JAGO.

No. 4.

The Archbishop of Canterbury to the Earl of Iddesleigh.—(*Received January* 12.)

(Confidential.) *Lambeth Palace, January* 11, 1887.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge with my most respectful thanks the confidential communication which your Lordship caused to be made to me on the 4th January of the despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople,*

* No. 1.

inclosing a copy of the account of the grievances of the Nestorian Christians made to his Excellency by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, relating the circumstances of twelve Christian villages which have been, or are in process of being, handed over to the Koords.

I was informed lately by an English traveller fresh from the spot of the cruel injustice of these acts, but I did not introduce the subject, grievous as it is, into my communications with your Lordship, because I could not do so without introducing political questions into the consideration of the Mission work, which it was understood should proceed without any interference on the part of the Mission clergy or myself in those relations.

But as the subject has been raised, I may venture to add that this traveller told me of seven Christian villages in the neighbourhood of Kochanes which are in immediate danger. The unfortunate people, when their ancient Settlements are delivered to the Koords, have to leave them with much suffering, and their churches are ruined or converted into mosques.

I have no doubt that Her Majesty's Ambassador will do all that can be done to protect the people consistently with our position at Constantinople, the delicacy of which I fully understand.

With regard to Sir W. White's suggestion, that the Nestorians should have a Representative like other Christian communities at Constantinople, it would be of course most desirable, if it were possible, but I fear that the Nestorians of those districts which are under the Ottoman rule have been reduced not only to such poor circumstances as to be quite unable to maintain the position of a Representative at the Porte, but have also become by degrees too uneducated to find among themselves a competent person able to take such an office.

It is this want of education which they entreat us to meet by our educational mission.

With, &c.
(Signed) EDW. CANTUAR.

No. 5.

Sir J. Pauncefote to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Foreign Office, January 15, 1887.

My Lord Archbishop,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that a copy of your letter of the 11th instant will be forwarded to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, with instructions to continue to take such steps on behalf of the Nestorian Christians as he may deem judicious.

I am, &c.
(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

No. 6.

Sir W. White to the Earl of Iddesleigh.—(*Received January* 17.)

(No. 17.) *Constantinople, January* 10, 1887.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith to your Lordship copies of two despatches addressed to me by Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond.

The first incloses a Report by the Greek Archbishop of Trebizond, on his recent journey to Offi, remarking on the relations of Greeks and Turks in that district.

The second reports a conversation with the Governor of Trebizond respecting the renewal of Laz depredations, which his Excellency attributed to the return of their chief, Ali Pasha, and for whose recall an application has been made by the Governor to the Sublime Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 6.

Consul Longworth to Sir W. White.

(No. 3.) *Trebizond, January* 3, 1887.

Sir,

THE Greek Archbishop of Trebizond, who recently returned from a tour of inspection in his diocese, has presented me with a Report on his journey to Offi, a translation of which I beg to inclose for your Excellency's perusal.

Mgr. Gregorios is the first Bishop who had visited the locality for the last fifty years. His experience among the Turkish mountaineers of the place will, I believe, be considered interesting; while the evident impartiality with which he records the incidents of his journey cannot but tend to make his Report somewhat valuable.

Off, or Offis, is an eastern district of this vilayet, populated by about 100,000 souls, of which some 700 only are Christians. The inhabitants are reputed to be extremely fanatic, an impression prevalent among the generality of the Christians in Turkey, arising probably from the fact that the country is the birthplace of many of the Moslem priesthood, and its people are the descendants of renegades, who abjured Christianity some 200 years ago.

That such a conception of their religious characteristics is entirely erroneous is evident on the authority of the Greek Archbishop, who, as a dignitary of the Orthodox Church, was received by them most cordially, and who now bears personal witness to the fraternal relations existing between the Mussulman and Christian elements of the district.

The friendliness of disposition evinced by these Turks, so greatly in majority, for these Greeks, so greatly in minority, may be attributed to three combined causes, namely, the existence still of some sympathy for the religion of their forefathers, their preoccupation with their own feuds, and the absence of that rivalry of race and creed which so often in other parts of the Empire incites the people to deeds of outrage and rapine.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 6.

Archbishop Gregorios to Consul Longworth.

(Translation.) *Trebizond, December* 11 (23), 1886.

Sir,

I HAVE lately, as I had already the honour of informing you verbally, visited in my rout the few Christians inhabiting the district of Off, within this vilayet, where, since October 1837, no Archbishop in general, and not even a Metropolitan of Trebizond, in whose spiritual jurisdiction it lies, has set his foot; as the district, in consequence of the great number of Mussulmans and the nnmerous Ulemas and Softas which are produced by it, was and is thought a wild and dangerous one for the Christians, the Mussulman inhabitants being supposed to possess a fanaticism against all other creeds. As a consequence, no one dared, and scarcely any one dares yet, to venture into those parts.

When I expressed a desire to visit the district, many here and in the neighbouring Caza of Sourmené, in fear of something happening to me, endeavoured to dissuade me from taking this journey; notwithstanding this, however, I decided to visit the district in question, and did so in the last fortnight of last October, and I experienced just the contrary, for such an enthusiastic reception and such hospitality have been shown me on the part of the Mussulman element as I will not forget during my life, and which affords me great pleasure in enabling me to place my feelings in writing before you, the worthy Representative here of the great and noble English nation, who wished to know all this, believing that I may thus give vent to that gratitude which fills my heart to overflowing.

Offi, or Offis, your Honour, is a district of the Trebizond Vilayet along the Black Sea coast east of Trebizond, and at a distance of eighteen hours from here. It contains, according to the system of numbering the population by the occupied houses in these parts (for neither towns nor villages exist, but only country houses, or rather, cottages scattered over the length of the land), about 20,000 dwellings, of which scarcely 150 are Christians, divided into nine parts, and considered as nine villages, the remnants of the once existing Christianity in this region, the rest of the houses, 19,850, being exclusively Mahommedan, in many of which a Greek language is spoken, with numerous words of ancient origin.

The name of the place, Offis, is ancient Greek, derived from a river which runs

through the district, and whose course, winding in and out, resembles a serpent. I have seen the stream myself, and had I not known its name I could not but have called it Offis, or Off-Cazassi, as the Turks name it.

I have no intention to give here either the ancient history of the place, or by what race it was inhabited, nor the reason why the greater part of the inhabitants, though Mahommedans, use the Greek language in their families, and hold greatly to Christian customs; I will confine myself only to describing in a few words the great and unusual reception accorded me by these Mussulmans.

I have already said that neither towns nor villages exist, but there exists in several places large mansions belonging to former Beys; for not many years ago the land was ruled by a few powerful Chieftains of the country, who had each his own territorial boundaries, and who disputed with his neighbour for power and authority over the inhabitants. This power and authority has now practically vanished, and the most influential Beys have become but simple inhabitants. The people, however, accustomed to look up to them, and work for them as their Chiefs, speak to this day of the first-born as their Agha, and hence each of these divisions has an Agha. The word, however, has no longer any practical meaning, tending, as it does, only to show that the bearer is a Notable of the place.

These Aghas, or Déréh Beys, formerly so powerful, are still considered as first among the inhabitants whom they once ruled, and continue to have a moral influence on subjects of general interest affecting their families or the people with whom they are connected, so that friends and foes are by them held in common.

Mutual jealousies and matrimonial disputes have now replaced the old feuds for the maintenance of their antagonistic rule and power. It is thought, for instance, a befitting action if one clan carries off a girl from the other and has her married to one of their number. This done, the one party revels in triumph; while the other, taking it as a deadly insult to its power and honour, never rests, day or night, until the girl has been restored or the outrage avenged. In these combats assassinations are committed which produce a spirit of vengeance and perpetuates a feeling of hatred and antagonism among these exclusively Mahommedan families.

Each of these clans has its morally recognized Chief, has its topographical and communal boundaries, and has, for the ruling Elder of their families, a mansion fine to look at from without, but resembling a stable within, just as the Agha does not differ much from a simple villager.

These Chiefs have no rights over the Christians, nor do they molest them in any way; the latter resort to them only for the common interests of the clan within whose limits they reside. The Christians are left undisturbed, though small in number, and no forced labour is exacted from them by the Mussulmans, as is the case in many villages round Trebizond; not even are they subject to any discomfort, insult, or offence, but live together in fraternity and in mutual respect of each other's property and family honour.

A Mussulman one day being tried before the Court of the First Instance, observed unwittingly, and without malice prepense, but from mere habit, that a pound was changed by a Giaour, a word which cost him a fine of £ T. 1, which he paid at once without remonstrance on his part, or anger on that of his co-religionists, in a place where the Christian element is in such minority.

Christians and Mussulmans, moreover, help each other mutually. The burnt-down house of a Christian, for instance, whose integrity of character was respected by the Mussulmans, was reconstructed by them on a larger scale, and at their own expense. Incredible as all this I have seen and heard may be, it is nevertheless true. But let me come now to my own personal matters.

As soon as I disembarked on the coast and it became known that the Metropolitan had arrived in a place where, since 1837, no Bishop had visited, and where most of the inhabitants had never seen a Metropolitan, all the Mussulmans in the market and the Sub-Governor with his gendarmes thronged to welcome me with every token of honour; for though no villages exist where the authorities are, there is always a market-place to which, once a-week, the villagers assemble for the sale and purchase of the first necessaries of life. When I arrived at the Government house, it at once put on a festive look, and for two or three hours the offices were closed. The Beys, Aghas, and Notables, and even the Cadi, failed not to call on me to express their welcome and pay their respects. A schoolmaster of a Christian village came down with his pupils, and wherever I went they followed, or, rather, led the way, singing a song of welcome. The Sub-Governor and his staff had the patience to listen to this, and when, out of regard for them, I ordered it to cease, he begged me to allow the boys to sing freely in their joy at seeing a Metropolitan for the first time. The rest of the Mussulmans in the market, who for the

first time in their lives saw such a spectacle, were neither vexed nor annoyed at it, nor did they treat the scene with mockery, but looked on with respect as though it appertained to one of their own religious ceremonials.

The moment of departure arrived; every one of the Mussulmans pressed forward to offer me their horses. I, of course, had to accept the horse of the Agha of the place, to whom the rest gave way, and who begged me not only to ride it to my destination of six hours, but to keep it throughout my stay in the Off district. Besides the two gendarmes placed at my disposal by the Governor, there were young Mussulmans armed with good Martinis who accompanied me on foot to the village of six hours' distance. This happened in my journeys from village to village, if I may so call the cluster of houses scattered far apart round a church, or mosque, as their centre. Thus I was always escorted by five or ten well-armed Mussulman youths, some from the part I left and some from the part I intended visiting. At my entrance into each of these villages, or, rather, their boundaries, they would assemble on one side the Christians of the place, and on the other some ten or fifteen Mussulmans to receive us. On my arrival at the house allotted to me, the Mussulmans would take their departure without even a cup of coffee, nor in any way intrude themselves on the Christians, as they greedily do elsewhere, especially in Macedonia. On the following day only would the Mussulman Notables call on me, in a body, to wish me welcome and invite me to their "humble habitation," as they modestly described their homes, for a cup of coffee, lunch, or dinner. I accepted a few of these numerous invitations, at which meals the attention shown me is indescribable. These mountaineers, living where luxury is wanting and the products of nature are of the simplest, did their best to place before me some fifteen or twenty dishes, besides their finest table-linen, plates, and carpets, and endeavoured, in fact, by every means, to administer to my comforts, entertaining not only myself and suite, but also the Christians in my company, numbering from 50 to 100.

In my journeys from one place to another it was impossible for me to pass an Agha's house and not be pressed to dismount and partake of a meal, or at least of a cup of coffee which, at one of these mountain houses, was served, to my surprise, on a tray covered with lace. Their hospitality was not confined to this only; their horses and mules were even put gratuitously at my disposal, and they themselves accompanied me in my tour, impressing me strongly by plunging, Aghas though they be, up to their waists in cold water, so as to lead my horse safely through a stream against my most energetic and earnest protest.

It is a fact that, some 200 years ago, all the inhabitants were Christian, who abjured their faith; and one would think that in the manifestations of veneration for the person of the Metropolitan, the sentiments of their old Christian origin had awakened in them, and that they were trying now, in my person, to honour their once spiritual chiefs; otherwise, their attentions to me are inexplicable, unless it be that, in spite of their reputed wildness, fanaticism, and inhospitality, their real nature is so courteous as to make their guest everlastingly grateful. This must be so; for the Christians living with them, though few and poor, have, in each village, one or two churches in conspicuous places with belfries of several years' standing, though elsewhere, where the Christians are in majority, this and the establishment of schools have been prevented by Moslem fanaticsm.

No complaints have been heard from these Christians against their Mahommedan neighbours, who treat them with regard, their number though insignificantly small. They are allowed to take a share in governmental affairs; so that half the members are Christian in all the administrative and legal Councils of the districts.

When there, I thought to myself that the co-operation and fraternity so long sought for by every means and by the public press between the Turkish and Greek races, to the extent of influencing Governments, of uniting their destinies, and of having in common friends and foes, should start from here, where they already exist, and where such principles and ideas are being realized.

Such, your Honour, are the impressions made on me by my journey to Off; and I consider myself happy to be able to testify my gratitude towards these people, who treated me so kindly, by complying with your wish of making them known, hoping that these expressions will be of some benefit to them.

Apologizing for the length of the Report, I beg your Honour to accept, &c.

The Metropolitan,
(Signed) GREGORIOS.

Inclosure 3 in No. 6.

Consul Longworth to Sir W. White.

(No. 4. Confidential.)

Sir, *Trebizond, January* 3, 1887.

IN connection with my despatches Nos. 12, 13, and 23, dated respectively the 15th and 28th June, and the 7th October, 1886, I have further to report as follows.

The Governor-General of Trebizond, Sourouri Effendi, called on me yesterday, to express his anxiety at the renewal of Laz depredations in his western districts, and at the consequent emigrational movement of many Christian families into Russia.

His Excellency attributed the increased state of public insecurity, arising from the nefarious practices of Laz immigrants, to the encouragement and countenance given them by their Chief, Tchuruk Souli Ali Pasha, who, since the middle of November last, had returned to his old haunts at Unia and Ordou, though ordered to Trebizond as a Major-General attached to the 4th Army Corps. The Vali, in bringing these facts to my notice, begged me most earnestly to solicit your Excellency's mediation towards the removal of this person from a locality where his presence has so baneful and evil an influence over his fellow-immigrants.

That the Lazes were comparatively quiet before the return of Ali Pasha is only too evident. Soon after his arrival only did rumours of their misdeeds begin to reach us; while within the last few days their outrages must have exceeded all bounds, if the reports be true of persons robbed, murdered, and kidnapped, of women violated, of houses burnt, and of villages devastated.

Sourouri Effendi is also applying direct to the Porte for the recall of Ali Pasha, an application which, for the sake of the people, I hope will meet with success. Whether the Vali, however, is prompted to this by purer motives than mere jealousy and envy is a matter of doubt; for, countenanced both by the Sultan, Sourouri Effendi and Ali Pasha seem to vie with each other for influence at the Palace. Both have friends at Court; both are disliked by the people; and both are said to be enriching themselves in these parts, the one by bribery, the other by violence.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 7.

Sir W. White to the Earl of Iddesleigh.—(Received January 17.)

(No. 18. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 10, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting a case of great hardship which has recently occurred there in the exile of three Armenian boys to Igdir.

On the receipt of this despatch I caused inquiries to be made at the Armenian Patriarchate of Comon Capou, and, in reply, was informed that as yet no official information on the matter had been received by the Patriarch, but that he was made acquainted with the fact from private sources which did not explain on what charges these boys have undergone such a severe sentence.

Under these circumstances, I do not propose to take any action until I shall receive further information on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 7.

Vice-Consul Barnham to Sir W. White.

(Confidential.)

Sir, *Van, December* 23, 1886.

I BEG to report to your Excellency an instance of the persecution to which the Governor-General of Van subjects the Christian population of this city, one which has shocked public feeling more than any previous act of the Government, and for which

I find it difficult to trace a parallel even among the harsh and arbitrary acts of the Russian police.

During the term of office of Boghos Effendi, the Armenian Bishop referred to in my despatch to his Excellency Sir Edward Thornton No. 13 of the 8th July last, eight or ten Armenian youths obtained permission from the Bishop to meet on Sunday evenings in the school-room of the Church of Sourp Asdouvadzain (the Holy Virgin), on the outskirts of the city, for the purpose of study. Most of them had employment in the city on week-days, therefore they could only obtain leisure for study on Sundays. Many of them had been pupils at the school of Portakalian Effendi, whose school, together with its printing press, was closed by order of the present Vali, as reported by Mr. Lamb in his letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Everett No. 3 of the 4th June, 1885. The leader of the group was a young man named Therlamuzian, who, having taken part in the collision with the military on the 6th July last, fled to Persia to escape imprisonment. After his departure the priest and elders of the church called the boys together, and told them that they could not allow them to continue their studies in their church school, as, in the absence of Therlamuzian, there was no one to keep order among them. Having done so they wrote a letter to Hohannes Vartabed, the Armenian Vicar *ad interim*, asking for his approval of their action. At the weekly meeting of the Armenian Council this letter was read and discussed, and, as a reason for refusing so allow the further use of the school-room, Thaddeus Vartabed, a priest, who lived near the church, remarked that, after finishing their studies, the boys often went out shooting in the neighbourhood—"So much so indeed that if the Turks heard them they would believe they were practising for military purposes." Some one in the Council went straightway to the Vali and repeated these words, and the Vali at once gave orders for the arrest of the boys. It happened that on the Sunday evening previous to their arrest three of the boys went to the church school, and, on finding the door locked, stole the key from the bellringer, and thus obtained an entrance; whereupon some of the Church authorities, accompanied by a police officer, turned them out. These three were arrested by order of the Vali, and tried before the Criminal Section of the Court of First Instance. In the proceedings which took place before the Court no evidence was given as to the purposes for which they met, nor as to their alleged use of fire-arms. Indeed, one of the members of the Court, named Selim Effendi, told my Dragoman that they were at a loss to make out a case against them, but that finally they decided that the offence of obtaining a school-key by stealth might come under the head of pickpocketing, and a sentence was accordingly pronounced of three months' imprisonment. The following day the news spread in Van that the Vali had given orders that the three boys should be sent into exile at Konia and start for their destination the same evening. The names of these unfortunate lads are Kevork Odian, aged 18; Michael Natanian, aged 16; and Ohannes Kankarian, aged 14. The parents of Odian and Kankarian are poor, those of Natanian well-to-do. The universal conviction among the people of Van, Christian and Mussulman, is that these boys are entirely innocent of anything which deserved to arouse the suspicions of the Government beyond the fact that they formerly attended the Portakalian School, and I share the conviction. With one sporting gun between them they sometimes went in the direction of the Varak Mountain to shoot partridges; the books they used were works on geography and history approved by the Ministry of Public Instruction, and no books of a questionable nature were found in their possession. The winter in Van is this year unusually severe, and snow lies deep over most of the ground between this and Trebizond (the route chosen); but as the order stood they were to leave the same night without any extra clothing for the journey, and with bare time to say good-bye to their friends.

Your Excellency can imagine the distress of their parents and the indignation expressed in every quarter. I went to the Vali, and begged him to pardon them. He pleaded the existence of an Imperial Iradé for their removal. I observed that no Iradé would have come if he had not applied for it. He acknowledged that he had telegraphed to the Palace, reporting that the boys had been practising with fire-arms for military purposes, practising gymnastics, and reading seditious books. I replied that I knew very well that at their trial nothing of the sort had been proved against them, and I told him that I thought it a pitiless and unjustifiable proceeding. He then said that, knowing, as I must do, the character of the Armenian people of Van, he regretted to see that I retained any sentiment of pity for them.

A year ago the present Vali, having persuaded the Sultan that the Armenians of Van were disaffected and addicted to treasonable practices, received permission to send into exile any whose presence in Van he might consider dangerous to the public peace. It is possible that the Iradé he referred to in his interview with me is no new one, but

the standing order now alluded to. He exercised this power on three previous occasions,* and on two others was only prevented from doing so by the timely flight of his intended victims.† Under the existing law, by which a Vali is prohibited from interfering in matters which affect the Courts of Law, this power of exile is a terrible weapon in the hands of such a man as Hamid Pasha. It flatters his pride, for it enables him to assert himself as a judicial power independent of the Tribunals, or, if he pleased to override their decisions by substituting his own—a sentence of exile. He delights to employ it against a people whom, to judge by his language to me, he evidently detests. To enhance his own value in the eyes of the Sultan, he sends distorted reports of the conduct of the Armenians to the Palace, and of his own actions with regard to them, with the result that four months ago he received the first order of the Medjidié, and one month since the Nischani Imtiyaz. If it were possible to drive the Armenians to rebellion, surely his policy would bring it about. But, as your Excellency is aware, this is not probable. They have no leaders, no courage, no unity; but they are, indeed, greatly to be pitied. I do not believe that the Armenians are treated with such systematic harshness in other parts of the Empire.

On leaving the Vali I called upon the newly-appointed Armenian Vicar, Crecoritz Effendi. He was transferred from Moosh to Van about six weeks and arrived here about a fortnight ago. I found him greatly discouraged that his term of office should have commenced under such bad auspices. He begged me to again intercede on behalf of the exiles, asking for a delay of three days, to enable their parents to find them clothing. I sent the Dragoman to the konak, but as he learned on his arrival there that a delay of thirty-six hours had been accorded, I thought it useless to take further steps in the matter. The Vicar told me that he intends to write to the Patriarchate by this mail, tendering his resignation unless the exiles are recalled. He said that, although he had been so short a time in Van, he knew he could answer for the loyalty of his people; but, seeing the vindictive attitude of the Vali, he feared for himself should he act too prominently in the matter. He, however, instructed the boys' parents to telegraph to the Sultan and Validé Sultán. The Patriarchate will, no doubt, make representations on the subject to the Porte. May I ask your Excellency to support them?

The three exiles left yesterday morning at sunrise. As a favour, the Vali changed their destination from Konia to Igdir, near Kaiserieh; but as the latter place is only some 20 hours on this side of Konia, I do not see that one place has any advantage over the other.

It is supposed that one reason for the action of the Vali is that the uncle of one of the boys, named Garabed Natanian, who was exiled by Hamid Pasha in May last year, arrives at this juncture in Van, having, against the Vali's wish, received a free pardon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 8.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(No. 18.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 18, 1887.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch No. 649 of the 22nd ultimo, I transmit herewith a copy of a furtner letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury,‡ pointing out that seven Christian villages in the neighbourhood of Kochanes are reported to be in danger of being handed over to the Kurds.

Your Excellency should continue to take such steps as you may deem judicious on behalf of the Nestorian Christians, who seem unable, from circumstances described by the Archbishop, to maintain a Representative of their Church at Constantinople.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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* Portakalian Effendi, Garabed Natanian, Satrag Kaldjian.
† Satrag Effendi, Therlamuzian Effendi.
‡ No. 4.

No. 9.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

Foreign Office, January 22, 1887.

(No. 25.)

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 18, marked Confidential, of the 10th instant, relative to the case of three Armenian boys, who, on trivial grounds, have been exiled by the Vali of Van from that town to Igdir.

The case appears, from the account given of it by Mr. Vice-Consul Barnham, to be one of great hardship, but your Excellency has no doubt acted judiciously in refraining from intervention until you have further information as to the facts and thesteps taken in other quarters to obtain mitigation of the sentence.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 10.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received February* 28.)

Constantinople, February 15, 1887.

(No. 59.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, reporting the departure of Saïb Bey from that place.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 10.

Consul Henderson to Sir W. White.

Aleppo, January 31, 1887.

(No. 3.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that Saïb Bey left this morning for Constantinople. His departure is universally regretted, and deputations from every class and sect of the population waited on him this morning to give expression to this feeling, and to accompany him for an hour or two on his journey to Alexandretta.

His Excellency told me yesterday, when he paid his farewell visit, that he would have wished to remain a month or two longer at Aleppo in order to supervise the execution of the various measures of redress which he had recommended to the Porte, as he gave me to understand that the new Vali was little disposed to second his efforts in this direction, and wished to draw a veil over the misdeeds of his predecessor.

He remarked that the exchange of Valis in this way, and their mutual protection of each other's interests, was a very comfortable arrangement for themselves, but a most undesirable one for the tranquillity and well-being of the population over whom they ruled; and he said he had told Osman Pasha that no personal consideration would deter him from informing the Sultan, in the interview he would ask for on his arrival at Constantinople, of the intrigues by which the ex-Governor-General deceived His Majesty, and would lay before him such proofs of Djemil Pasha's cruelty and extortion as should disgrace him for life. I said to Saïb Bey that the removal of Djemil Pasha from the administration of affairs at Aleppo could not be viewed otherwise than as an immense relief—a deliverance, in fact, from very great suffering on the part of the whole community, but that I feared there were other matters of more vital importance that the punishment of an ex-Governor-General occupying the attention both of the Porte and Palace for the moment.

His Excellency went on to say that little idea could be formed in official circles at Constantinople of the actual state of affairs which had existed in this province for some years past, and that he himself had hesitated to believe the reports which had been made till he had been a few weeks at Aleppo, and seen the state of affairs himself.

I gathered from Saïb Bey that he intended to point out to His Majesty the undesirability of appointing military officers as Governors-General of large and important provinces with a mixed population, as they had neither the training nor experience to fit them for the discharge of their duties, and he seemed sanguine about converting His Majesty to the opinions he himself holds on the subject.

Saïb Bey is accompanied to Constantinople by the recently appointed Procureur-Général, the ex-Procureur-Général, and a number of other persons, to whom Osman Pasha has already shown himself inimical.

It appears that the threats held by the new Vali to the Procureur-Général were such that the latter telegraphed the substance of them to Djevdet Pasha, who authorized the Procureur-Général's departure for Constantinople in order that he may personally lay the matter before the Ministry of Justice.

Osman Pasha's antecedents are not in his favour, and whatever experience he may have gained in the administration of the Hedjaz will not be of much use to him here. He is a man of sudden impulse and of but limited intelligence, but I believe he regrets having already got himself into hot water at Aleppo with the Grand Vizier, the Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Finances.

His Excellency's first impression of the irrepressible Bishops cannot be a very agreeable one, as when he went to return the visit of the Syrian Patriarch the door was shut in his face because he had, I believe quite inadvertently, called on two Bishops before calling on the Patriarch.

Saïb Bey's last words to me were that he wished very much to call on your Excellency on his arrival at Constantinople, but as his visit might be misinterpreted, he begged your Excellency to allow Sir A. Sandison to call on him, unless, in your Excellency's opinion, the political situation should preclude your Excellency from complying with his request.

During the eighteen years I have been in Turkey I have never met a Turkish official of such an independent, fearless, and upright character, and were a few more of his stamp to be found and sent through the provinces to redress the abuses of the provincial administration, it would do more practical good than a cart-load of Firmans Iradés, Vizirial letters, and such paper reforms.

As regards the pending questions in which we are more immediately interested, Saïb Bey is satisfied of the injustice which has been done to Mr. Dermarcar, and his Report will be in this sense. He had unfortunately no executive powers himself, but he recommended Osman Pasha to put Dermarcar into possession of the property of which Djemil Pasha had unjustly deprived him. I have already asked Osman Pasha to do so, but he asked me to allow the matter to stand over for a week or two.

As regards the question of the Consular title-deeds, after reading all the papers and examining the plan on the spot, Saïb Bey said the matter was finished as "Hukker," the decision of the Cadi, as reported in my No. 17 of the 29th July, 1885, being final; and he asked the present Cadi to put this decision into legal form. I shall endeavour to obtain this document from the Cadi, who may perhaps give it without an order from the Sheikh-ul-Islam.

The other matters are in a fair way of being settled.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. HENDERSON.

No. 11.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received February* 28.)

(No. 64.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, February 19, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship's an interesting and creditable political Report of affairs in the Vilayet of Van during the year 1886, which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Vice-Consul Barnham to Sir W. White.

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Van, January 27, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for the favour of your Excellency's perusal, a general Report upon the political condition of the Vilayet of Van.

It would have been a grateful task had it been possible for me to report the introduction of some really useful reform or the indication of a more liberal spirit on the part of the governing body towards the Rayah population during the past year.

No reform, however, has been introduced to ameliorate in any way the condition of the people. Such changes as have occurred in the administration have been effected for economic reasons, and were applied to every province of the Empire without distinction. They in no way affect the well-being of the people.

My despatches Nos. 13, 22, and 27 have imperfectly portrayed the character of the Vali, and the singular unwisdom of the policy which he has pursued with regard to the Armenians. He lacks the well-balanced mind without which it is impossible to rule successfully a people of antagonistic race and religion, and I find the reason for this in his religious fanaticism, in his natural timidity of character, and in his fear of being removed from office. He clings to office, for he has a malicious enjoyment of power, and to attain his object poses before the eyes of the Sultan as the repressor of a turbulent and disaffected population, distorting the truth to serve his own ends. In this respect he is, indeed, unscrupulous, but has more than once overreached himself. About a year ago he denounced the Military Commander of Van, his Excellency Munir Pasha, to the Porte as a traitor, because he frequented the houses of the foreign Consuls, which were alleged by the Vali to be centres of political action in favour of Armenian emancipation; but Munir Pasha justified himself, and the Porte ordered the Vali to make an ample apology.

On many occasions the Armenians have behaved indiscreetly, but I know of no action of theirs during the past year which, in a political sense, could be justly described as seditious or criminal. I know of no class of Armenians who are so childish, vain, and ignorant, yet so impotent to do real mischief, even if they had the opportunity, as the Armenians of Van. They are too timid, too much in awe of their rulers, and have far too little cohesion as a people, to be worthy of serious alarm on the part of the Government. If, however, some of them have fallen into trouble, and suffered imprisonment or banishment at the hands of the Vali, it is because they were betrayed by certain time-servers among their own people who are always ready to sacrifice their sense of patriotism in order to obtain the favour of the Vali. They appear to be utterly wanting in those qualities which make an independent and progressive people. Among the resident Armenians, however, there are a few natives of Constantinople who display a considerable amount of refinement and an earnest desire to improve the tone of their social life by cultivating the society of Europeans. They are, however, subject to a strict surveillance by the police, and being innocent of any cause of offence, find their position intolerable.

In describing the character of the Vali, it is right to add that, so far as it is possible to judge from common report, he is free from all taint of dishonesty and corruption. At the date of this despatch he is extremely ill, and, in the opinion of the medical staff, cannot live long. I trust that the Porte will be willing to make the experiment of sending a liberal-minded Governor as his successor.

About two months ago Mgr. Crecoritz Aleatyan, late Vicar of Moosh, was transferred here in the same capacity, and now presides over the Armenian Church in Van. He was, during eleven years, titular Vicar of Moosh, but having sent an address to Constantinople complaining of the outrageous conduct of Aarifi Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, the Porte called upon the Patriarchate to remove him, with how little justification may be seen from the fact that the Porte was compelled to transfer Aarifi Pasha to Diarbekir shortly afterwards. This happened at the juncture of events succeeding the affray in the Churches of Van in July last. The Patriarchate then appointed him here. He is a man of refined manners, and has the address and dignity necessary to his office. He does not speak French, but in other respects appears to be well and liberally educated. His position is, however, extremely difficult, for the attitude of the Vali is hostile to him, and the party of the exiled Bishop Boghos (the friend of the Vali) is strong in the city. At this early date it is not easy to judge how far the personal ascendency of the new Vicar will contribute to secure a peaceful future to the Church in Van. Bishop Boghos is, unfortunately, within easy call, as he resides on one of the islands of Lake Van, and I feel very strongly that, until both he and the present Vali are far removed from the arena, Church factions will not cease to exist.

The present staff of the vilayet consists of the following members:—

The Defterdar, Essad Effendi, is a native of Constantinople, and previously held the same office at Koniah. He was appointed to Van in the spring of 1885. He has no ability, is a confirmed drunkard, and extremely corrupt.

The Mektubji, Enveri Effendi, is a native of Constantinople, and previously held the same office at Bassora. He was transferred to Van quite recently.

The Alai Bey, Mehemet Bey (Colonel of Gendarmerie), is a native of Koniah,

and was transferred here from the Hekkiari, where he held the same office, during the summer of last year.

The *ex officio* members of the Council of Administration are the Vali, Cadi, Defterdar, Mufti, and Mektubji. The elected members are Temir Oghlou Ghalib Pasha, and Hadji Bekir Agha, both corrupt and fanatical Mussulmans; and Kevook Effendi Kaldjian, a highly respected Armenian merchant of Van. The place of one Christian member is at present vacant.

The Mufti, Hussein Husni Effendi, is a native of Akhlat, in this vilayet. He is corrupt, but has no influence outside the sphere of his duties. He has held his present appointment for fifteen years.

The Municipality is in the hands of Temir Oghlou Tahir Pasha, brother of the aforesaid Ghalib Pasha. His most important duties are utterly neglected. Within the precincts of the town, and close to the barracks, large pools of stagnant water are allowed to accumulate, which in the heat of summer emit poisonous vapours, and to these I attribute a severe outbreak of typhoid among the troops last summer.

Changes have taken place in the legal establishments during the past year.

The Cadi, Ibrahim Bey, is a native of Constantinople, who arrived in Van last August. He bears a fair reputation for intelligence and honesty.

The President of the Court of First Instance (Civil Section), Edhem Ibrahim Bey, is a native of Constantinople, who arrived recently. Little is known of him as yet. Jemal-ud-din Bey, President of the Court of First Instance (Criminal Section), has held his present office more than three years. He is a native of Constantinople, his father being at present Cadi at Nicosia, in Cyprus. He is intelligent and honest, but intemperate. The President of the Court of Appeal, Aziz Bey, was formerly Chief Clerk of the Chamber of Accusations in Constantinople. He is much liked, and appears to have many of the qualities of a good Judge.

The President of the Tribunal of Commerce, Apik Effendi, is an Armenian Catholic, nephew of Daoud Pasha, once Governor of the Lebanon. He was at one time member of the Court of Cassation, and at another member of the Court of First Instance in Constantinople (Civil Section). During a service of thirty-five years he has acquired a profound knowledge of law, his integrity is unquestioned, and he is in every respect one of the best officials I have met.

The Procureur-Général, Nafiz Bey, was exiled to Van from Constantinople during the spring of last year. He is a man of considerable ability, and has the appearance of a European. His assistant, Enhar Effendi, was formerly Turkish Consul at Khoi, in Persia. The Court of Appeal in Van is the venue for all cases of appeal emanating from the Courts of Van, Hekkiari, and Bitlis.

Although the Presidents of the various Courts are men of relatively fair reputation, I cannot say that in their hands justice is unerring. The distinction between a Christian and a Mussulman suitor is always observed, the Christian failing to establish his case against a Mussulman unless he pays for it heavily. The only Court in which one can feel confident of receiving really fair treatment is the Tribunal of Commerce. In the Criminal Court persons are frequently sent to prison and loaded with chains without preliminary examination by order of the Juges d'Instruction. (See No. 22 of the 15th October last.)

In enumerating the Mussulman members of the Government, I would remark that I am personally unacquainted with all, except the President of the Criminal Court. Whether acting upon their own initiative, or by the advice of the Vali, they avoid all intercourse with the Vice-Consulate. Had there been a large British colony here this would be a serious matter, for, with the best will to promote their interests, I should be able to do very little.

The same situation applies to the Russian Consul, with the result that he has absented himself during the greater part of the year in Russia. He is at present serving on a Commission at Tiflis, the object of which is said to be the establishment of military cordons along the frontier facing the Vilayets of Van and Erzeroum, to prevent conflict between the nomad Kurds passing to and fro across the frontier. The Consulate is at present in charge of the Cancellier, a Circassian of the family of Sheikh Schamyl, named Michael Nicolavitch Sheriffoff. The influence of the Russian Government in this vilayet is not great, and no events have occurred during the past year which suggest any active intrigue.

The Kaïmakams who rule in the eight cazas of the vilayet are totally unfit for their posts.

The Kaïmakam of Shattack is Reschid Bey, once a famous robber, belonging to the family of Nouroullah Bey, the Kurdish Chieftain of the Hekkiari named

in my Report No. 26 of the 7th ultimo. He was some years ago arrested and banished, but subsequently appointed to office as Kaïmakam of Shattack. His caza is a mountainous district where the Armenians suffer constant outrage at the hands of the Kurds. His family history gives him a dangerous ascendency among the Kurdish tribes.

The Kaïmakam of Kawash, Iskender Bey, is a refugee from Kars, a man of intemperate habits.

The Kaïmakam of Pergri, Khoorshid Bey, is a person of low habits, ignorant, violent, and corrupt.

The Kaïmakam of Muks, Sidki Bey, is incapable and intemperate.

The Kaïmakam of Ardjisch, Djellalin Bey, was dismissed from the military service, in which he held the rank of Major. He is a drunken and profligate scoundrel.

The Kaïmakam of Eljivaz is Ahmed Tevfik Bey, a native of Constantinople, of similar character.

The Kaïmakam of Katchkan, Osman Bey, was formerly Chief Clerk of the Council of Administration in Van. His reputation is scarcely better.

The Caza of Katchkan was separated from the Vilayet of Bitlis and annexed to that of Van in June last. It has a population of about 9,000 souls, of whom about five-eighths are Armenians. This raises the total population of the vilayet, according to statistics taken during the famine, to about 143,000, excluding nomads.

During the past year the following officials quitted Van, their posts having been abolished: the Mutessarif of Van (Deputy Governor), the Inspector of Justice, the Inspector of Finance, and the Collectors of Tithe, together with the numerous petty officials in the cazas employed in the same work of collection, in all about thirty-five persons. Their removal effects a trifling economy of about 13,000 piastres per month. The Tithe Office having been abolished, the duty of collection will, in future, devolve exclusively upon the gendarmerie, certain members of the force being detailed for this particular duty. Last year the tithes were sold for 500,000 piastres. Those for the year 1885 were collected by the Government, and have not yet been disposed of. Hitherto there has been a steady annual decrease, due both to smaller production and to the wholesale robbery practised by the collectors.

The military force in this vilayet consists of three and a-half battalions of infantry, or about 2,500 rank and file. They are distributed between three stations, Van, Shattack, and Ardjisch. There is also a "buluk" (company) of horse artillery with eight or ten mountain guns.

The gendarmerie comprises in all 393 men, horse and foot. Their arrears of pay amount to 260,000 piastres. They are an ill-conditioned force, and, when on duty in the villages, are not sufficiently under control.

The secret police force consists of one Inspector, Shevki Effendi; three Mussulman detectives, Nouri, Raschid, and Mustafa; and one Armenian detective, Avidis Belavian. They are all of them men with vile antecedents, and their operations were described in my Report No. 22 of the 20th October last.

Although the records of crime are not so numerous as those of the neighbouring vilayets, it should be remembered that Van is a small province with an inconsiderable population. Such outrages as come to light bear the stamp of barbarism. Murders are perpetrated in cold blood, and followed by mutilations of the dead too horrible to relate. A great incentive to crime would be removed if the Government would break up those mixed villages where Armenians and Kurds live side by side. To their existence I attribute, among other things, the instances which have occurred during the past year where Armenian girls have been carried off by Kurds, sometimes by force, but often with their own consent. Near Ardjisch two Armenian girls were carried off by Kurds of the same village last June, but after protracted efforts on the part of the Armenian Vicar to recover them it was decided that they were consenting parties, and they were finally married to the objects of their choice. Since that date three other cases have occurred in the neighbourhood of Van. Of course, the result is that they change their religion. The Government is responsible, and the Patriarchate has certainly the right to demand that, in future, Christian and Mussulman villages should be kept distinct. Moreover, the Kurds are all armed, and the Christians not; and there is abundant evidence to show that murders of Armenians more frequently occur in villages where both races are found. Thus the existence of a few Kurdish houses in a village mainly Armenian leads frequently to the expulsion of the larger element; for the minority are supported by powerful Kurdish neighbours, who either drive out the Christians by force, or, by bribery, obtain an unjust title to the village from the

authorities, and having done so, replace the Christian tenants by Mussulmans. This question, in its bearing upon the Nestorians of Hekkiari, was the subject of my Report No. 26 of the 7th ultimo.

Among the Kurds who oppress the Christian villagers the chief are the Temir Oghlou family in Van. They possess lands and flocks throughout the district stretching from Van to Bayazid. In these lands and flocks they are partners with the Chiefs of the Haideranli and other tribes, and when the Christians are attacked and outraged by these tribesmen, who escape punishment and even pursuit, it is easy to understand who it is that stays the hand of justice.

A reference to the Passport Office shows that during the past year permits were issued to a little more than 2,000 persons, of whom 1,200 left Van for Constantinople, and the residue chiefly to Russia. Besides these there certainly would be a large number who did not apply for the necessary permit. I mention this because the extent of emigration of Armenian peasantry to Constantinople may be regarded as some criterion of the prosperity of the country. The rate of emigration appears to be increasing steadily, and shows that the produce of the soil in this vilayet is not sufficiently remunerative to give any hope of better days. The villagers find bread to eat, but nothing more. The very abundance of corn in the vilayet is a guarantee of the people's poverty, for, having no export, it has little value, and the peasantry have nothing else to offer which would find a market outside the vilayet. Moreover, the taxes are rigorously exacted, and untold hardships are endured before they are paid. Should the harvest fail at any time, there will, necessarily, be great suffering.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 12.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received April* 9.)

(No. 115.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 29, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the widespread dissatisfaction in the province, the corruption which exists, and the general unsatisfactory mode of government under the present Vali.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 12.

Consul Dickson to Sir W. White.

(No. 13.)
Sir, *Damascus, March* 14, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that Nashid Pasha, the Governor-General of Syria, returned to Damascus from Beyrout, where he had been spending the winter, on the 10th ultimo. His Excellency hastened his departure from that place in order to be present in Damascus during the visit of the Prince of Naples, whose arrival I reported in my despatch No. 12 of the 10th instant, but shortly after reaching this city his Excellency became very seriously ill, and at one time his life was almost despaired of. He was consequently unable to take part in any of the ceremonies connected with the visit of the Prince, having been confined to his room during the time His Royal Highness remained in Damascus. His Excellency has, however, so far recovered as to be able now to attend to the transaction of public business, but it is reported that the state of his health is still far from satisfactory.

Nothing specially worthy of comment has occurred in this district of late, nor has the feeling of tranquillity been in any way disturbed, notwithstanding the enmity reported to be existing between the Moslems and Christians in Beyrout, and which at one time seems to have reached such a pitch as to require the interference of the authorities.

Much dissatisfaction prevails as to the general state of the administration of this province, and complaints are heard from all sects and nationalities. Corruption is reported to exist in every department of the Government, and Ottoman subjects are unable to transact any business with the authorities, or to have access to the Courts of

Justice without the payment of bribes. On the other hand, persons enjoying foreign protection are often hindered in their mercantile transactions by the demand of the authorities that they must prove their foreign nationality before having their petitions referred to the Commercial Tribunal. And this state of affairs is the cause of considerable discontent, which is also shared by the peasantry, who, on their part, are annoyed by the increased exactions to which they have to submit in the payment of the tithe and the land tax.

As regards the Hauran, matters have remained quiet for some time past, but this is attributed more to the jealousy and rivalry of the Druse Chiefs, who cannot agree to act in concert, than to a feeling of contentment with the manner in which the government of their district is conducted. The two Druse Chiefs, Abou Abdé-el-Atrash and Hussein-el-Halibi, referred to in my despatches No. 17 of the 31st May and No. 21 of the 24th July of last year, as having been allured into Damascus and subsequently arrested by orders of the Governor-General, were quietly liberated a little more than a month ago, after their relatives had paid, as a bribe, a sum of 400*l.*, which is stated to have found its way into the purses of some of the highest functionaries. It is probable, therefore, that the Druse district will continue tranquil for the present, especially as the inhabitants will soon be occupied with their harvest, which promises to be very abundant this year.

In the desert the different Bedouin tribes have been engaged of late in making raids upon one another, the Sebaa having completely routed the Beni Shakhur and some other tribes a little to the south of Ain Zerka, when they captured a considerable amount of booty; but no incursions by these tribes are reported to have taken place into the cultivated districts of the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

No. 13.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received April 9.)

(No. 116.) *Constantinople, March* 29, 1887.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, reporting an unusual emigration of Christians from that vilayet to Russia, and the reasons for this emigation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Consul Longworth to Sir W. White.

Trebizond, March 12, 1887.

Sir,

THE emigration of Christians to Russia from the vilayet of Trebizond is taking place on a rather alarming scale.

The exodus is depopulating the country of its able-bodied men at the rate of from 400 to 500 per month, which if it goes on will soon reduce considerably the 1,003,236 souls of the vilayet given in last year's Census. The chief causes of the emigrational movement may be briefly stated to be the want of public security, as is instanced by acts of brigandage and Laz excesses, the laxity and corruption of the governing class, who with impunity are allowed to sell justice and extort money, and lastly, the vexatious impediments raised by Government Regulations to industrial, commercial, and agricultural pursuits.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 14.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received April 9.)

(No. 48. Commercial.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 2, 1887.

MR. BAX-IRONSIDE, who, as Third Secretary of this Embassy, collected at my request various data and documents connected with the projected railways in Asiatic Turkey, has drawn up a very able Memorandum from all this information, which appears to me to be quite deserving of being circulated amongst persons interested in the subject, and which I have the honour to submit to your Lordship's appreciation.

As it is impossible to make any inquiries concerning the Asiatic provinces of this Empire without being struck with the political aspect of the questions connected with this country, Mr. Bax-Ironside very properly embodied the remarks of this nature in a separate Report which he likewise addressed to me, and of which a copy is also inclosed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 14.

Mr. Bax-Ironside to Sir W. White.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March* 29, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency a Report on the existing railway system of Asia Minor, accompanied by three Maps, together with various schemes for the extension of the existing lines, and a statement of measures which might be undertaken to surmount obstacles which are a hindrance to attempting concessionnaires.

With reference to this Report, I venture to offer to your Excellency the following observations on the extreme importance of opening up this country, both from a political and commercial point of view.

The question as to whether England is to permit Russia to take possession of Constantinople without our offering a helping hand to the Turks is very constantly reiterated: the answer is seldom a satisfactory one, and is generally given with doubt and hesitation.

If it be in the negative, then let us endeavour to assist the Turk in Asia Minor from a commercial point of view. We are already sufficiently well acquainted with the Russian method of trade procedure to know that their enormous protective Tariffs and their determination to keep out British trade will, under a Russian occupation of Asia Minor, be fatal to British interests. As a proof, we have only to examine the diminished Returns of our Black Sea trade with Russia; whereas in Asia Minor under the rule of the Turk, covered with a network of railways, would cause a very considerable extension of commercial business, would add materially to the wealth of the country, and would greatly advance British interests.

If the answer be in the affirmative, then I make bold to assert that Her Majesty's Government should consider it their duty materially to assist and support any British scheme that would tend to render the frontier of Asia Minor less vulnerable, and should press on the Porte the vital necessity of strengthening their Asiatic provinces from a military point of view, and to this end should explain to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan the necessity and importance of constructing with all possible dispatch the Diarbekir line, minutely discussed in my Report.

This is rendered all the more pressing by recent political events. Every day that passes without a Russian occupation of Bulgaria strengthens the position of that gallant Principality, raises our hopes in the future of the establishment of a permanent Balkanic Confederation as a barrier to Muscovite progress, and can only heighten our belief that the Czar will not make a descent upon Constantinople from European territory, but will work his way through the rich but neglected provinces of Asia Minor, which we are anxious should be flooded by the dawn of civilization in the shape of a system of railways, which would tend to the material benefit of both England and Turkey.

The first scheme explained in the latter portion of my Report is termed the "Prossel scheme." The second is one proposed and drawn up by Sir R. Macdonald

Stephenson as far back as the year 1850. It is curious and interesting to consider the completely different complexion Eastern affairs would have taken had this Concession been granted when originally applied for.

Some railways would already have existed in Turkey during the Crimean War. A complete network would have covered Asia Minor within a very short period after the conclusion of peace in 1856; that country, rich in natural resources, and inhabited by a thrifty and, by nature, governable people, would have increased rapidly in prosperity; the population would have largely multiplied, the Public Debt would never have been suspended, Turkey would have counted as a really great Power, would have been able to defend herself against all comers, would have been an invaluable ally, and one of the most difficult problems attending the Eastern question would have been solved.

The results would have been attained by the employment of British capital, and large profits would thereby have accrued to the British investor.

Sir R. Macdonald Stephenson's scheme has quite lately again come into prominence, and I beg to submit that any practical support that Her Majesty's Government can give should be afforded in order to obtain the realization of a plan so well conceived, and which would be so far reaching in its results.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 14.

Report by Mr. Bax-Ironside on the Railways in Asia Minor.

THE main objects of this Report are to point out the great benefits which would accrue to Turkey, and indirectly to our trade and our political position in the East, by the establishment of a complete railway system in Asia Minor, the obstacles, by no means insurmountable, attendant on that scheme, and the most favourable methods of surmounting those obstacles, together with a short description of the existing lines.

It should first be premised that Ottoman railways in Europe and any schemes for Euphrates and Tigris Valley lines are not taken into consideration here, the reasons being that, owing to the increasing diminution of Ottoman territory in Europe, and the constant pressure being brought to bear upon Turkey by neighbouring European Powers to increase or complete, as it may be, the short lines already commenced, as, for example, that from Vranja to Uscub, the matter is one of less importance from a pecuniary and commercial point of view; and as regards the Euphrates Valley, sufficient information is already in the hands of Her Majesty's Government on the subject, more especially the important Reports by Colonel Chisney.

Asia Minor comprises an area of 473,137 square miles, irrespective of the Vilayets of Bagdad, Mecca, Hedjaz, and Yemen, and the only railways existing in this large tract are:—

(α.) The Ottoman Railway from Smyrna to Aidin, established in 1856; 130 miles.

(β.) The Smyrna and Cassaba Railway, established 1863; length of main line, 61 miles.

(γ.) The Ismidt-Haidar-Pasha Railway; mileage, 27 miles.

(δ.) The Mersina-Tarsus-Adana Railway, established 1886; mileage, 42.

Of these four lines, the only one of any great importance is the oldest established, viz., the Ottoman Railway from Smyrna to Aidin. This line was constructed almost entirely from British capital, and has opened up the resources of the vilayet in a most remarkable manner. As the half-yearly Reports of this Company have been in the hands of the public since the opening of the line, it would be superfluous to enter into details as to the return on the outlay of capital and the cost of the line, but to take a short résumé of the state of the line at the present time, and its position only as far back as 1879-80, would be of advantage.

The forty-fifth half-yearly Report of June 1880 of this Company shows that the receipts for the half-year amounted to 34,195*l.*, as compared with 43,633*l.* in the corresponding period of 1879. The causes of this decrease were said to be that the crops of valonea, cotton, and olives of 1879 were much below the average, and that business in grain was slack. The total receipts, however, were 93,563*l.*, as compared with 93,050*l.* in the preceding year, and the net profits for the twelve months ending the 30th June, 1880, were 35,521*l.*, as compared with 37,473*l.* in the preceding year.

By further later references to the half-yearly Reports and accounts published by the Company it will be observed that a continued and steady traffic has been obtained, the Reports have annually been more favourable, and profits have largely increased. Thus, directly comparing the last half-yearly Report of 1885 with that of June 1880, we find that the net profits of the former amount to 139,500*l.*, as compared with 35,521*l.* in June 1880, and this without any considerable extension of mileage. The receipts from the traffic from January to June 1886 were the largest earned in any half-year of the Company, and the Manager estimated that the gross receipts for the twelve months ending the 30th June, 1886, would not be under 23,000*l.*

Further, arrangements are now being made by this Company to redeem the coupons of the 6 per cent. debentures, and overtures have been made to the Manager that any proposals for a Concession which the Company were prepared to make would be favourably entertained.

The main objects of this Company now are a prolongation of their Concession for a term of twenty-five years from the present date of expiration in 1910, and the power to construct an extension of the Company's main line to Dineir and of the Tireh branch to Ademish.

The remaining objects relate to authority to raise capital by shares and debentures and other financial schemes, which do not materially affect the position of the Company.

I have entered minutely into the present condition and future prospects of this line. As it may be termed the representative railway in Asia Minor, and being as it is so completely in the hands of British capitalists, it is invested with a further interest in our eyes.

As regards the Smyrna-Cassaba line, it will be perceived on reference to the half-yearly Reports of the Company that they are progressing as satisfactorily financially as their larger rival.

The gross receipts of this Company for the half-year ending the 30th June, 1886, amounted to 57,882*l.*, and the net revenue to 29,246*l.*: in May 1885 the totals stood respectively at 59,687*l.* and 32,608*l.*, but this slight increase is to be accounted for by the fact that the early season of 1885 was a particularly good one, and was followed by autumn and winter floods and inundations, the cost of damages caused by these being debited in the 1886 spring accounts. The development of the vine culture in the magnesia district, and the consequent increase in raisins, is one amongst other healthy signs of the probable improvement in the export trade of this line.

The small railway from Haidar-Pasha to Ismidt will, it is to be presumed, make no material progress until an extension has been obtained as far at least as Angora; but of this something will be said later on.

The Mersina-Tarsus-Adana Railway, of which a Map is inclosed, is only just opened; but should the necessary extensions be obtained and the rich Konia district be tapped and opened up to trade, there is no reason whatever why it should not become a financial success. Its present length is about 42 miles, but it is proposed to extend the railway eastwards to Diarbekir and Mardin, and westward to Konia, and also to make quays and jetties at Mersina. Should this be accomplished there is no doubt that this will become a most important line, and will be viewed favourably by the Turks as soon as an extension to Diarbekir has been completed.

The difficulties to be surmounted in obtaining Concessions are great, chiefly because the Turks view no lines with favourable eyes except from a strategic point of view; and as Diarbekir would be the centre of a strategic frontier against Russian advances into Asia Minor, any Company offering to extend their line to that town would have less difficulty in obtaining a Concession than would otherwise be the case.

Hence the importance which the new Mersina-Adana Railway would acquire should the Diarbekir extension be determined on. The line would be as follows: Commencing at Adana it would cross the Western Cilician Plain to Missis; thence it would follow the right bank of the Pyramus for a few miles, and, after crossing it, would pass through the Eastern Cilician Plain to the termination of the Yalpouzi Boghaz, some 60 miles from Adana: here a tunnel would have to be made of 2 miles in length, and the line would run on level till the 96th mile from Adana, where a branch would be made to Merash, a distance of 26 miles; thence to Aintab, 146 miles from Adana. At the 190th mile the line would reach the right bank of the Euphrates, at the 240th mile Urfa.

Up to this point no great difficulties present themselves, but from Urfa to Diarbekir the line would be costly, and the country is poor. Hence, the Company would no doubt prefer an alternative line to Mardin, which might be prolonged to the Valley of the Tigris at Mosul.

Here it is, however, it may be presumed, where the concessionnaires will meet with their difficulty.

The Turks would be willing for a line to be made to Diarbekir; the argument they advance is something as follows: we are willing to see a line to the centre of our proposed strategic frontier for military purposes; should you guarantee to complete the line, we see no vital objection to a Concession being granted; you, however, will not guarantee to complete the line further than it is likely to pay for commercial purposes, *i.e.*, should you arrive at a certain point, say Urfa, on the proposed Diarbekir-Adana (or, maybe, Mardin-Adana) line every mile beyond Urfa in the direction of Diarbekir will diminish your profits, but will tend towards the accomplishment of our wishes; hence you must guarantee to complete the line right through to Diarbekir. The same argument holds good of the Haidar-Pasha-Ismidt-Angora extension through Kaisarieh to Diarbekir, and of the possible Samsoon-Sivas line to Diarbekir, both of which will be discussed later.

As far as can be ascertained at present, no Companies have fairly faced these difficulties, and they have in no way tended to arouse the Ottoman Government from their continued apathy on the subject, by pressing their demands for Concessions according to their own ideas of the needs of the country and to suit their own pockets.

In the case of the line under discussion, a branch could be made from Urfa to Diarbekir at no very great cost, and the main line could run as projected, I believe by Sir T. Tancred, from Urfa to Mardin, and thence to Mosul, or a loop-line might be made in the shape of an isosceles triangle with Diarbekir as its head and Urfa and Mardin as its bases. This, however, would be a matter for future consideration, but the Company should ungrudgingly guarantee to include Diarbekir in the scheme of the line.

Continuing our description of the Mardin line, it might readily be prolonged, as before mentioned, to the Valley of the Tigris at Mosul.

The country between Adana, Merash, and Aintab is a highly productive one, though the excessive cost of transport prevents the export of any produce except of the more highly-priced articles. For this reason the growing of corn has been abandoned, and vines have taken the place of the cheaper agricultural crops.

The increased area under wheat in Russia and America has been considered by many competent authorities to be an important factor tending to the disadvantage of the Asia Minor schemes. It should, however, be borne in mind that the country of which we are treating is not only a wheat country, but that it numbers among its products grapes, oil, figs, tobacco, melons, and many other varieties of fruits, barley, rice, maize, hemp, flax, &c., all of which would readily tend to exportation, and the cultivation of which would be immensely increased by the opening up of the country.

Near Aintab are to be found 200 square miles of vineyards, and a large area is under the same crop at Mersh. Forty different varieties of grape are grown, and are largely converted into raisins.

Amongst other productions of this particular region the following are the principal: rice, tobacco, cotton wool, timber, cereals, valonea, medicinal roots, gum, dried fruits, almonds and pistachio nuts, raisins, honey, large quantities of sheep, cattle, and horses.

The works upon this line between Adana and Mardin are, on the whole, not of a costly nature, excepting one long tunnel of nearly two miles, and the few miles of grading required for the ascent and descent of the Amanus and the ascent of the Kurt-Dagh.

And now to turn to the Adana-Konia Railway. This line leaving Adana would traverse the Taurus by the chasm known as the Melimenji Boghaz, through which flows the Chachit Su, a tributary of the Sarus. [For some 13 miles the river runs between walls of rock, in many places rising perpendicular to a height of 2,000 feet.]

At the end of this Boghaz the valley opens out, and at Bosanti, 46 miles from Adana, the railway would cross the roads leading from Karamania, Nigdi, and Cæsarea to Tarsus and Mersina. In order to give some idea of the natural wealth of this district, it may be mentioned that for some weeks of the seasons of 1885-86 over 2,000 camels per diem arrived at Mersina laden with Karamanian produce.

From Bosanti this line would pass up the open valley, which is cultivated in many places to Ulukishla, a high plateau 5,300 feet above the sea, and would thence fall into the Karamanian Plain, at or near Eregli, 3,500 feet above the sea.

Eregli is 100 miles from Adana, and might possibly be the point of junction with the main line, Constantinople-Bagdad, which might pass viâ Angora, Cæsarea, and

Higde, although, as will be seen by reference to Map No. 2, I personally consider the direct line should run through Angora, Cæsarea, and Diarbekir to Bagdad.

From Eregli a plain extends to Karamania and Konia. The length of this line, Adana Konia, would be about 230 miles.

In favourable seasons Karamania can produce upwards of 400,000 tons of produce, but at present the excessive cost of transport is prohibitory on many classes of agricultural produce. Taking five [?], the cost of transport for cereals is 16*s.* per quarter. For this reason the local price seldom exceeds 4*s.* per quarter. As grain could profitably be carried by railway for 2*s.* per quarter from Karamania to the sea, a very large increase in the value of the tithes would result to the Government, without taking into consideration the enormous benefits conferred upon the population.

Concessions for the lines connected with Map 1 have been applied for, and those lines are comprised within those recommended by the Military Commission appointed to examine and report upon the scheme of Asiatic railways, recommended to the Ottoman Government by his Excellency Hassan Fehmi Pasha when he held the position of Minister of Public Works. The recommendations of the Military Commission were afterwards confirmed by an Imperial Iradé.

We have now accomplished our description of the few existing lines in Asia Minor, and have arrived at some details concerning the possible extension of the Mersina-Tarsus-Adana line; it will now be my object to put before you a scheme for the construction of a network of narrow-gauge railways, the length of which might be fixed at the outset at 3,000 kilom., and might be intrusted by a Government Concession to a joint-stock Company.

This scheme has been proposed to the Ottoman Government by a German capitalist, and there appears to be a possibility of its being adopted: the negotiations on this head have extended over the period of a year.

The main lines are marked in red in the accompanying Map No. 2 and their possible extensions in blue.

The Mersina-Adana, Smyrna-Aidin, and Smyrna-Cassaba lines, which have been already sufficiently described, are not taken into account in the following project. As it may be considered to be of practical value, very minute details as to its realization are given. It should be borne in mind that the importance for obtaining a Concession for a narrow-gauge line cannot be over-estimated, as the saving of expenditure would be very great, and the objection that broad-gauge lines would have to be constructed later does not apply, as the main object is to construct a line of some sort as soon as possible. When the objection is raised that a broad gauge is required, this of itself would show that the railways were a financial success, and the necessary capital would at once be forthcoming. In judging of this scheme, the economic condition of the Ottoman Empire must be taken into consideration.

The lines to be first constructed are (*cf.* Map 2):—

(α.) Ismid-Angora viâ Cæsarea Diarbekir-Bagdad.
(β.) Alexandrette (Svédic) Aintab Diarbekir.
(γ.) Samsoon-Sivas, with an eventual junction at Diarbekir.
(δ.) Moudania-Broussa (Eski-Chekir). This line is already completed as far as Broussa, but it is not in working order.

The price of construction to be paid by the Government to the Company to which it has granted the Concession would be 6,000*l.* a kilom. Thus the 3,000 kilom. would amount to 18,000,000*l.* This last sum would be redeemed in ninety-nine years, and would bear interest at 7 per cent. Thus an annual payment of 1,260,000*l.* would be required and a payment to a sinking fund of 10 per cent. The difficulty would be to obtain the money for the realization of this scheme, but the promoters suggest the following combination.

It is postulated that the railways mentioned are to be constructed in ten years. During the ten years that the construction would last, the Company should not count any interest during the first five years for the sums which would be due to it in consequence of the completion and the commencement of the working of a portion of the railway. For the second period of five years the Company might put in the profits the interest of the capital of 18,000,000*l.* The interest of this period of five years might be capitalized and added to the first capital. They would furnish together with this last a total capital which might be redeemed in ninety years, and which would pay an interest of 7 per cent.

It will thus result as follows:—

First capital 18,000,000*l.*, paying an annual interest of 1,260,000*l.* These interests capitalized during five years give 7,220,300*l.* Thus the total capital would be

18,000,000*l.* + 7,220,300*l.* = 25,229,300*l.* Interest to pay on total capital at 7 per cent., 1,776,000*l.* Sinking fund 1 per cent., 252,200*l.*

As means which might be provided for the payment of interest of redemption of capital, the following combination might be found suitable.

The establishment of an officially valued zone comprising 20 kilom. on both sides of the line of cultivated land, or of land capable of cultivation. Thus 40 kilom. for each kilometre of railway.

The introduction into the officially valued zone of a fixed land tax replacing the system of tithes. The revenues of this tax would be kept by the Company, and would go, in the first place, to pay the interest and redeem the capital.

The surplus would be handed over to the Government.

	£
This tax would amount to	4,200,000
Interest deducted	1,766,000
	2,434,000
Sinking fund	252,200
Remainder as profit	2,181,710

The principal points to be considered here are the working of the railway. This should remain in the hands of the Company, on conditions acceded to by the Ottoman Government.

The Expenses of Surveying.—The surveying might be done by the Company, with the co-operation of the Government, and the expenses borne by the landed proprietors, who would pay their quota as should be determined.

The Mines and Forests situated in the zone should be surveyed and worked entirely by the Company.

An agricultural bank might be established by the Company for the zone, the bank having the exclusive right of mortgaging the property of the assessed zone.

With regard to the revenues emanating from the fixed tax in the sections surveyed in the first ten years, according to the preceding proposition they would appertain exclusively to the Ottoman Government. If it is, however, considered possible that the sections Ismidt, Angora, and Samsoon-Sivas could be completed in four years from the commencement of the undertaking, these sections, whose approximate length is 700 kilom., would give an annual return of about £T. 900,000. These revenues could then possibly be used as the basis of a loan to be made eventually to the Ottoman Government, or as a modification of the present project.

With regard to revenues emanating from the sale of lands belonging to the Ottoman Government, according to inquiries made two-fifths of the property comprised in the surveyed zone belongs to the Ottoman Government. These lands, which at the present time are scarcely cultivated, would evidently rise considerably in value after the construction of the railways. The sale of this land would assure a revenue of 20,000,000*l.*, and the Company could, and I think would, succeed in bringing it within the circle of its operations. One of the many difficulties connected with this scheme would consist in obtaining the consent of the Ottoman Government to the establishment of an officially valued agricultural zone.

Personally, the project appears to me to be financially unsound, and the price of construction, viz., 6,000*l.* per kilom., is exorbitant, the average cost in Europe not amounting to more than 3,000*l.* per kilom.; but, as I have already stated, there appears to be a possibility of the Ottoman Government adopting this project with certain modifications which are at the present time in course of discussion.

My opinion is, that if the conviction could be imparted to the right quarter in England that the Sublime Porte was in earnest about its Asiatic railways, it might have them through British agency now, as it might have had them any time in the last twenty years on the easiest terms. But the Ottoman Government has always shown so much hesitation about these railways, and has been swayed by so many fears and fancies regarding them, that there has been no opening for the plain dealing with which England approaches a great undertaking of this kind. The Porte has always feared encroachment on its supreme rights, quite forgetting that the railways themselves would increase its power of supporting these rights, providing, of course, that the terms on which they are conceded do not implicitly sanction encroachment, as appears to be the case in the scheme I have just detailed.

The proposal which I have just detailed appears to me to be of quite a different nature to the preceding one. The author is Sir R. Macdonald Stephenson, well

known as one of our foremost engineers in India, and as the promoter of a scheme for [?] European and Asiatic railways, and for creating an international railway system.

This project, which was pressed on the Porte in 1850 and in 1878, has again come to the front, and it is earnestly to be desired that so sensible, sound, and statesmanlike a scheme should be adopted by the Ottoman Government in the interests of both countries.

If the Sublime Porte was to give its consent to this scheme, it could be immediately carried into execution without any guarantee or pecuniary assistance from either the British or Ottoman Governments.

The network would comprehend about 3,000 miles of railways, radiating from Constantinople. One of these lines would be constructed from Ismidt to Sivas, and from there to the Persian frontier at Khotour, and would be destined to connect the Indian railway system with the European system, and to direct the larger bulk of Oriental trade towards Constantinople. The general character of these fifteen Asiatic lines has been carefully studied: some of them have been specially examined by experts under the direction of Sir R. M. Stephenson; others, mainly the minor lines, were suggested in 1871 by the Ottoman authorities as being of great importance to the public interest.

The proposed system is as follows:—

	Miles
Principal lines for express trains:—	
Ismidt to Sivas	410
Sivas to Mouch, traversing the Kharpout Plain	300
Mouch viâ Van, to the Persian frontier at Khotour	150
Local lines:—	
1. Ismidt to Broussa viâ Sabandja, Lefkeh, and Yenishekir	100
2. Broussa viâ Muhalitch, Omar Keui, Balukeui, Biach, Galenobe, and Ak-Hissar, to Manisa, on the Smyrna-Cassaba Railway	180
3. Lefkeh viâ Eski-shekir, Sidi Ghazi, Bulvadin, and Ak-shekir to Konia ..	250
4. Cassaba viâ Sarl, Coula, El-Ushak, to Afsim-Kara-Hissar	160
5. Afsim to the junction of the Konia line at Bulvardin	30
6. Bulvardin viâ Hamza Hadji, Chakmak, and Hija to Angora	155
7. Ardin viâ Sarakoi, Denizli, Chonas, Chardak, Ketchiburlee, Isbarto, Egerdir, and Kerchi to Konia	300
8. Konia to Cæsarea	100
9. Cæsarea to Sivas	110
10. Sivas to Samsoon	180
11. A branch from the principal line near Kharpout viâ Diarbekir, Nissebin, Mosul, to Bagdad	505
12. A branch from the principal line near Arabkir viâ Kamach and Erzingian to Erzeroum	180
Total	3,200

With regard to the principal line, it would comprehend the following sections:—Ismidt to Sivas, Sivas to Mouch, Mouch to Van, and thence to Khotour on the Persian frontier, as per Map 3. The general lie of the country as far as this important line is concerned has already been described in this Report, and it need only be stated that it presents no insurmountable or even grave difficulties in the way of construction.

With regard to the local lines, the following résumé of their character may be useful:—

1. *Ismidt to Broussa.*—This line would traverse a fertile plain through its entire length, with the exception of slight undulations near the town of Yinere, where a tunnel would have to be constructed.

2. The Broussa-Manissa line would traverse a more elevated country, and two slight detours would have to be made, one at Balekesir and the other at Balukoi: the latter portion of the line would pass through an elevated country, which, however, presents no difficulties.

3. From Lefkeh to Konia the railway would have to traverse an elevated district, and one in which considerable natural difficulties would have to be surmounted; these present, however, no insuperable obstacles, and the line would open up a fertile country, and tend to connect the Cassaba and Mersina systems (*cf.* Maps 1 and 2).

Nos. 4, 5, and 6.—These lines present no difficulty in the way of construction. The latter would follow the ancient road from Assar-Kalessi to Angora through a rich and fertile country.

7. The line from Ardin to Konia would complete the junction between the

Cassaba and Mersina-Adana Companies. It would be easy of construction, and it might be considered advisable, instead of making a detour at Isbarté, to conduct the line from Maradas to Barousle, making a small branch line to Isbarté.

8. From Konia to Cæsarea the line in many parts would have to be raised in order to guard against the inundations south of Touz Gueul; and the country round the foot of Mount Argæus would have to be carefully surveyed, so as to fix upon the most favourable route amidst the rocky soil.

9. The Cæsarea-Sivas line presents no difficulties, but No. 10, from Sivas to Samsoon, is less satisfactory, and it might even be necessary to choose an alternative route, viz., a line from Samsoon to Mersivan, and thus join the principal line passing through Amania, Evkat, and Nicksar.

11. With regard to this line between Kharpoot and Diarbekir, Mount Taurus would have to be crossed. This would cause a considerable expense, but present no obstacles of great difficulty.

12. The principal line passing through Arabkir, Kamach Erzinghan, and Erzeroum would follow the road along the Euphrates, but an alternative route passing the Deyroim Dagh might be adopted.

With regard to the terms and conditions proposed by Sir R. M. Stephenson for the construction of railways in Asiatic Turkey, they are as follows. He is willing to construct 3,000 miles of railway on the lines already indicated, and no guarantee would be required of the Imperial Ottoman Government.

When circumstances permitted the Ottoman Government should allow bands of soldiers or peasants to assist the engineers and workmen of the Company in constructing the line—the Government to grant the necessary land for the construction of the railway free of charge,—the Government to obtain and give over to the Company any land that the latter might require on payment being made by the Company to the Government.

The Company would then have the option of selling, letting, or cultivating these lands, and it would guarantee to pay 25 per cent. on all net profits realized under this head to the Government. The Government to grant to the Company leases of such mines and forests as the former shall approve of if they have not already been let out on lease, and the Company would guarantee to survey and work them and to pay the Government half of the net profits realized, guaranteeing that these profits shall not be less than 20,000*l.* annually, a sum superior to that actually received by the Government.

The Company would also be willing to pay to the Imperial Ottoman Government half of the surplus of the profits realized on all the lines constructed by the Company in Asiatic Turkey after the shareholders have received 7½ per cent. They would send out experienced engineers, &c., at their own expense, and would prove to the satisfaction of the Imperial Ottoman Government that they possess the necessary capital for constructing the lines. With regard to the arrangement for assistance to be rendered by soldiers or peasants, the Company would supply overseers furnished with the necessary tools for construction, and would grant a pecuniary benefice to the Government workmen.

As the works would be of great public importance, and would be of incalculable advantage to the inhabitants, there is every reason to suppose that they would be as willing to undertake them as an analogous race in Egypt are to assist in completing irrigation works.

If the Government, for any pressing reason, such as war or any other cause, found itself unable to supply the necessary labour at a given time, the Company would not claim any indemnity for the enforced delay thus occasioned.

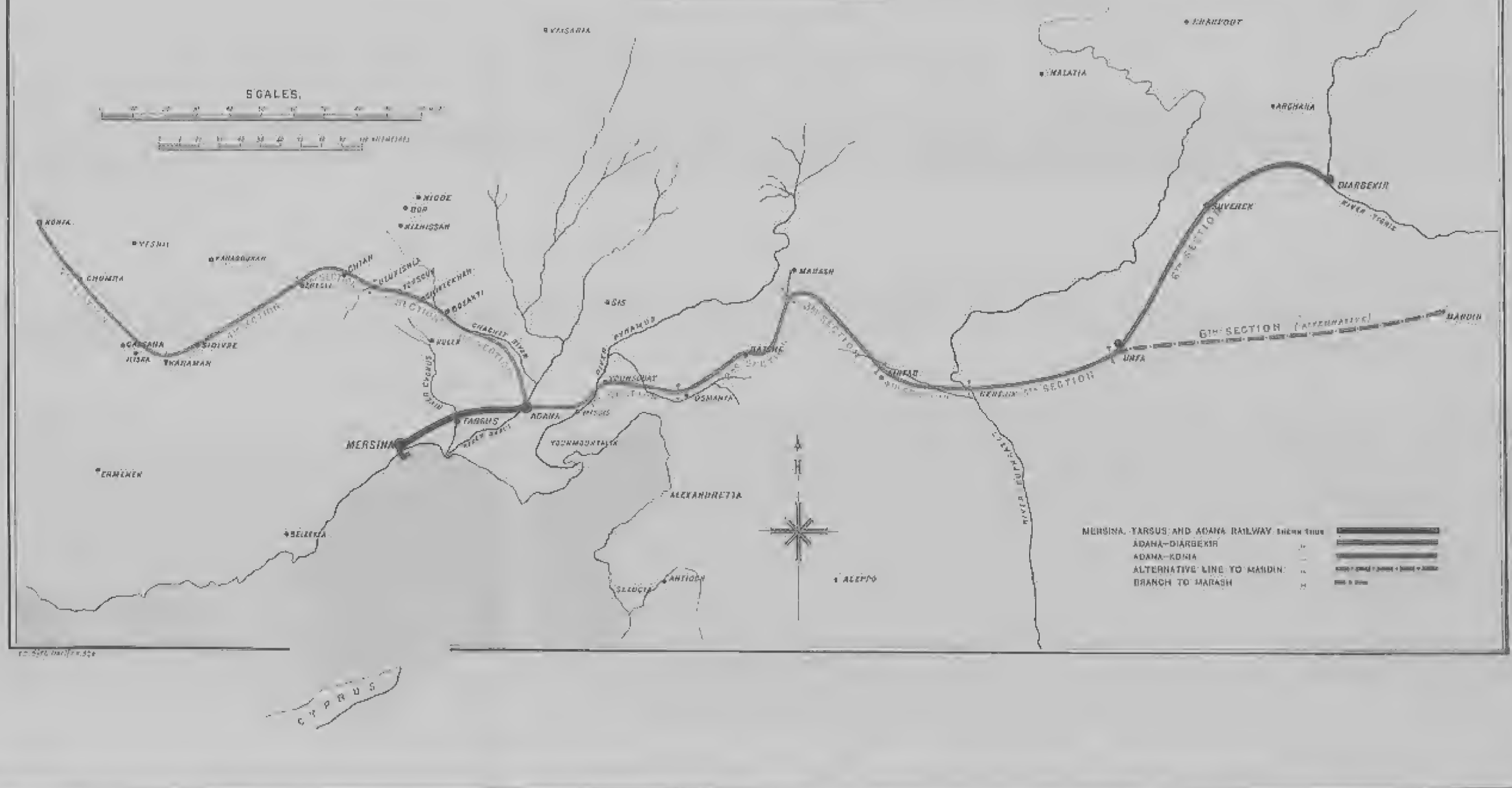
These appear to be Sir R. M. Stephenson's principal conditions and terms. Nothing could be more straightforward or simple, nor could any Government contemplate easier terms from any Company, whether native or foreign. No one can compare this scheme with the previous one and not note the marked difference financially and otherwise between the two, and no reason is discernible upon the surface why the Imperial Ottoman Government should not close with Sir R. M. Stephenson's offer, unless it be that it has not yet made up its mind as to the necessity of railways in its Asiatic possessions.

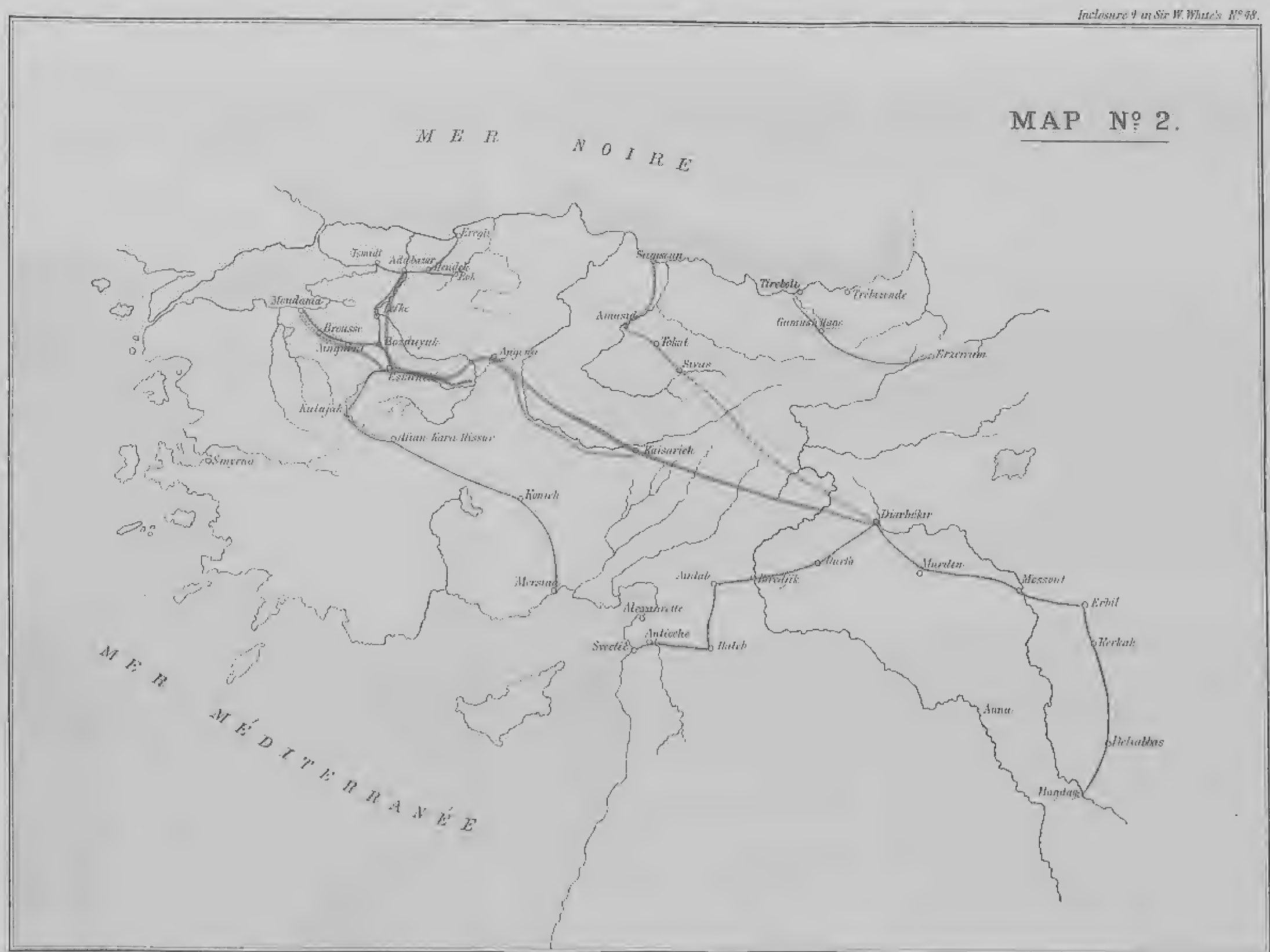
It can only be repeated that, through lack of cheap transport, surplus crops in Asia Minor cannot be exported, and this is the bitter cry of the country. Yet there is absolutely no reason why Turkey should not become a great corn-growing country.

Cheap railways, sufficient shipping, and the removal of all restrictions on trade

MAP NO. 1. ASIA MINOR.

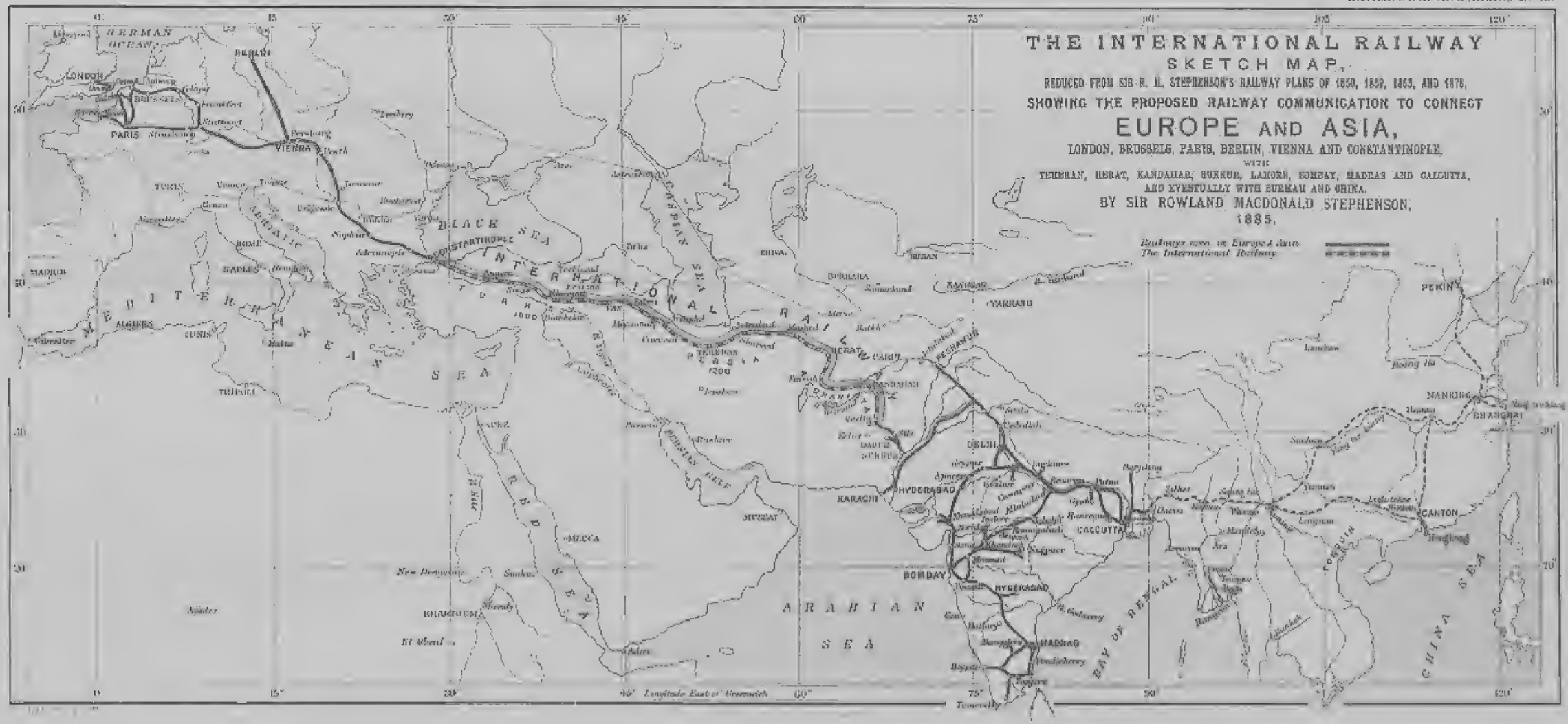
Map showing proposed extensions from the Mersina Tarsus & Adana Railway Eastwards via the Euphrates & Tigris Valleys to Diarbekir and Mardin, and Westwards to Konia.




MAP No. 2.
MER NOIRE
MER MÉDITERRANÉE
Eregli
Ismidt
Adabazar
Hendek
Bek
Moudania
Lefke
Brousse
Bozduyuk
Angora
Eskichéhir
Kutajah
Afian Kara Hissar
Smyrna
Konieh
Mersina
Samsoun
Amasia
Tokat
Sivas
Tireboli
Trébizonde
Gumush Hane
Erzerum
Kaisarieh
Diarbékir
Durfa
Mardin
Mossoul
Erbil
Kerkuk
Dehabbas
Hamdag
Aunu
Andab
Bereljik
Alexandrette
Antioche
Svetié
Haleb

MAP NO. 3.

Inclosure 5 in Sir W. White's No. 48.



would quickly change her plains into cultivated fields, and the people are willing to work if they can but see a prospect of fair remuneration for their labour.

(Signed) H. O. BAX-IRONSIDE.

Constantinople, March 28, 1887.

Inclosures 3, 4, and 5 in No. 14.

Three Maps numbered 1, 2, *and* 3.

No. 15.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received April 9.)

(No. 124.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 4, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of an interesting Report by Mr. Barnham of the general political position of the Hekkiari Vilayet, which appears to have been compiled with very great care, and treated in considerable detail.

Mr. Barnham concludes by stating that it is probable that that vilayet will shortly be reduced to the status of a sandjak and reunited to the Vilayet of Van.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Vice-Consul Barnham to Sir W. White.

(No. 4.)

Sir, *Van, March* 2, 1887.

I BEG to submit, for the favour of your Excellency's perusal, a General Report upon the political condition of the Vilayet of Hekkiari.

The Hekkiari is an expression applied to a serrated mass of mountains which serve to mark the natural boundary between Turkish-Armenia and Persia. It owes its status as a vilayet to its frontier position, to the turbulent character of its population, and to the facility for preserving order among that population when the operations of government could be directed from close quarters. It was constituted a vilayet in 1880. So far as I am able to judge, the form and extent of the vilayet is inaccurately shown on Kiepert's Map.

As seen in the Sketch Map annexed, the vilayet has for its northern and north-western boundary the Vilayet of Van. Its western boundary commences at about longitude 40° 30′ (meridian of Paris), and lititude 37° 30′, and takes a course somewhat west of south to a point just north of the 37th parallel, where its southern frontier follows a course of the River Ghara, a branch of the Lesser Zab (an affluent of the Tigris), and after leaving that stream is carried nearly due east to the great mountain ridge which forms the eastern frontier of the vilayet. Its western frontier separates it from the Vilayet of Bitlis, its southern from that of Mosul, and its eastern from Azerbijan Persia. At present the Hekkiari comprises the two Sandjaks of Bashkala and Gevver. The post of Mutessarif of Bashkala having been abolished during the past year, the Vali must be regarded as exercising the direct functions of Mutessarif in Bashkala (his place of residence), and a general control in the Sandjak of Gevver.

The Sandjak of Bashkala includes the six Cazas of Mahmoudié, Hamidié, Elbag, Nordouz, Julamerick, and Beit-uss-Shebab. That of Gevver comprises the four Cazas of Shemdinan, Oromar, Amedia, and Tehal. If we include the Cazas of Elbag and Dizé, which are governed by a Vali and Mutessarif respectively, we have twelve cazas altogether. These are again subdivided into twenty-six nahiés, governed by Christian or Mussulman Mudirs, according to the nature of the population. Among them we find Lesser Jelu, which marks the only point where the Turkish Government has been able to force its authority upon the Nestorian mountaineers.

Fikri Pasha, the Vali of Hekkiari, has held his present office nine months, and I have heard no complaints with regard to him. On the whole, he appears to be well suited to the post, for although himself a Koord, the Christians do not express themselves as dissatisfied with his rule. He is energetic and intelligent, and there has been no serious disturbance of public order since he held office. The Mutessarif of Gevver, Mehemet Sabit Pasha, has a good reputation. I made his acquaintance during the autumn, and

he struck me as being exceedingly well educated for a Turk, and his refinement of manner contrasted very remarkably with his surroundings.

The Defterdar of Bashkala, Server Effendi, was formerly Defterdar of Van. He is astute, well informed, and reputed honest.

The Cadi of Bashkala, a native of Aleppo, has a fair reputation, but is too old for office.

The Kaïmakams, with, perhaps, the exception of Mahmoud Bey, Kaïmakam of Mahmoudié, have very indifferent characters.

As regards the administration of justice by the Courts of Bashkala, I can only endorse the opinion expressed in previous Consular Reports. In principle, it was wrong to introduce a judicial system, born of and suited to European civilization, in a district peopled by heterogeneous and turbulent races, of antagonistic religions, most of whose members may be qualified as barbarians. The working of the system in Bashkala is full of abominations, for the Courts are in the hands of notoriously corrupt and fanatical men. The Criminal Court is still presided over by that Hadji Mustafa Effendi of Van, whose odious character formed the subject of Captain Clayton's Reports seven years ago.

I had occasion to visit the prison in Bashkala. The prisoners were all confined in one ward, a room about 18 feet square, with mud walls and floor, ventilated by a square hole in the roof, which served equally to admit the rain. I counted, to the best of my recollection, 130 men, all heavily chained, squatting in native fashion upon a floor reeking with filth, and huddled one against the other so closely that it seemed impossible to find room for another. Amongst them it was afterwards discovered that there were cases of syphilis. The accommodation was utterly out of proportion to the needs of the case. Prisons attached to the Vilayets' Courts, being supplied from all the cazas, ought to be made considerably larger. This prison was only recently constructed.

There are only two battalions of infantry in the Hekkiari, or about 1,500 men. These form four detachments, and are stationed respectively at Bashkala, Dizé (the residence of the Mutessarif of Gevver), Julamerick, and Shemdinan. There is no artillery and no cavalry in the vilayet. This is due to the impossibility of finding sufficient forage for the horses.

There is a force of 850 gendarmes, horse and foot, but in many parts of the vilayet, owing to the absence of forage and the depth of snow, no mounted gendarmes are to be found during the winter months.

A police force exists in Bashkala, consisting of one inspector and six private detectives, of whom only one is a Christian.

A carriage road in the direction of Van has been commenced, but the operations have broken down. There is difficulty in obtaining the necessary amount of labour, and the Engineer has recently resigned his appointment.

The races which people the Hekkiari are Koords, Turks, Persians, Nestorians, Armenians, and Jews.

The sedentary population is distributed as shown in the following Table:—

	Villages.	Koords.	Nestorians.	Armenians.	Jews.	Total.
Sandjak of—						
Bashkala	350	28,950	51,500	5,000	978	86,428
Gevver	295	31,518	12,245	1,024	350	45,137
Total	645	60,468	63,745	6,024	1,328	131,565

It is difficult to make a separate estimate of the number of nomad Koords who pass the summer in the Hekkiari, as the same tribes are also found within the limits of the Vilayet of Van. The following statistics should therefore be accepted for both vilayets. They are mainly derived from a book of travel by an Armenian priest, published in 1884, and agree very nearly with those given by Captain Clayton in 1880. I have, however, added to the numbers. They are estimated at six persons per tent, but in certain tribes the tents being more crowded, the estimate is made at the rate of seven per tent. These are marked with an asterisk:—

NOMAD KOORDS.

Number.	Name of Tribe.	Number of Tents.	Number of Souls.
1	Hartushi	250	1,500
2	Duschkili	180	1,080
3	Pinyanli	200	1,200
4	Sharafanli	200	1,200
5	Mahmoudanli	150	900
6	Seidanli	60	300
7	Zedganli	100	600
8	Hadjamanli	300	1,800
9	Ghevdanli	100	600
10	Sivganli	150	900
11	Mavroshanli	250	1,500
12	Isdourganli	150	900
13	Herekli	500	3,000
14	Shidanli	150	900
15	Khersganli	140	840
16	Hayanli	250	1,500
17	Balkanli	50	300
18	Patianli	150	900
19	Barandosti	150	900
20	Miranli	300	1,800
21	Alganli	200	1,200
22	Düderli	300	1,800
23	Gharisanli	150	900
24	Geldanli	150	900
25	Mahmendpiranli	100	600
26	Haverli	400	2,400
27	Shaveganli	150	900
28	Reshkanli	160	960
29	Khervatéli	100	600
30	Moghourlon*	300	2,100
31	Taghourlon*	150	950
32	Shemsikli*	400	2,800
33	Shekink*	250	1,800
34	Milanli*	100	700
35	Haideranli*	1,100	7,700
36	Levili*	100	500
37	Yezidi*	350	2,500
	Total	8,240	51,930

Of these tribes the first twenty-nine on the list pass the winter in the Vilayets of Diarbekir and Mosul. They come from great distances—the Duschki, for instance—coming from below Kerkouk. Their summer quarters are in the mountain districts of Mŏks and Shattack (Vilayet of Van), and throughout the Hekkiari. The remaining eight pass the winter in Persia. These are the more numerous and wealthier tribes. The Hekkiari may be considered as the original home of most of the Koordish tribes. Many form two distinct branches, one of which (the mother-tribe) remains within or near the Hekkiari, whilst the other, the offshoot, makes its summer quarters far away from the mother-tribe. Thus the Pinyanli are found both in the Hekkiari, and, in greater numbers, at Zacho, near the Tigris.

Statistics given by M. A. Yaba, Russian Consul at Erzeroum, in 1865, show that there were then no less than 35,879 Koordish tents, with a population of 272,153, in the districts of Van and Hekkiari. Therefore, we must infer that within the last twenty-two years famine or other causes have compelled whole tribes to abandon the Hekkiari camping-grounds. At the same time, the nomad Koords are certainly decreasing in numbers year by year. Of the tribes in the Hekkiari, those of Duschki, Hartuschi, and Pinyani are known as veritable scourges, and it speaks well for the authorities that order has been so well preserved among them during the past year. Indeed, the hold of the Turkish Government upon the Koords appears to be far more secure within recent years. On the other side of the frontier the case seems to be the reverse. Northern Persia has proved a fruitful field for disturbance during the autumn, the troops of Ooroomyah having on two occasions suffered defeat at the hands of the Koords, under a certain Hassan Bey. After a struggle lasting some eight months the Koords were defeated, and the sons of Hassan Bey (since dead) fled into the Hekkiari, and are now under the protection of Sheikh Sadik (son of the late Sheikh Obeidullah) in Shemdinan. In Turkey the heads of tribes are mostly in receipt of small pensions from the Porte, and the total expense incurred by thus securing their loyalty is by no means small.

The only Turks within the vilayet are officials, and probably do not exceed 300, including their harems. The Persians are a small moiety of the whole, and, for the most part, return to Persia before the winter sets in.

The Armenians are chiefly found in the Caza of Elbag. The ruins of villages and churches show that the population was at one time considerable.

The Jews are an offshoot of an extensive and ancient Colony at Salmas, in Northern Persia. They pursue a thriving trade in the villages. They are located in Bashkala, Dizzé, and Levi.

The Nestorians may be classed as tribal and non-tribal, and as tributary and non-tributary. Five principal tribes—the Tiyari, Tchoub, Baz, Jelu, and Diz occupy the mountain valleys to the south of Julamerick. They have a population of about 37,000, and all, with the exception of a group of villages marked upon the Map as Lesser Jelu, do not acknowledge the authority of the Porte.

The villages belonging to the independent Nestorians have a more cheerful aspect, and are essentially more prosperous than those of the Rayah Nestorians. The latter often contain only two or three hovels, whose outer walls are not more than 5 feet high, the rooms being mere pits sunk in the earth, and all their surroundings denoting the deepest poverty. The débris of abandoned dwellings is to be seen in every direction. A few fowls, a dozen sheep, and an acre of millet or barley is all they possess, and with such means they have to pay taxes to the Government, and as much as their Patriarch thinks fit to exact. Though better off, the tribal Nestorians are by no means prosperous. Their wealth consists entirely in their flocks, for, as a rule, the soil of their mountain valleys is unproductive, and yields only one annual crop, millet. This they reap in autumn, and leave for the support of their families, they themselves migrating for the winter months to Erivan, Tiflis, or Mosul. Many take their families with them. For this reason it is, perhaps, inaccurate to describe the Nestorians as sedentary.

Their customs are in the highest degree interesting. Like the Albanians, they recognize no law but that of retaliation, and although the *vendetta* does not usually take the same proportions as it does in Albania, it is prescribed by similar conditions, and its authority enters into every relation between man and man. Homicide demands the death of the slayer at the hands of the nearest relative of his victim. As an alternative, compensation may be made in land, the amount due being fixed by arbitration. The arbitration is made by the Meleks, or Chiefs of tribes. Formerly these were considerably under the control of the Patriarch, Mar Shimoun, but very many of the tribal Nestorians no longer respect his authority. Where his authority holds good, for each case of homicide he collects a fine, not exceeding 500 piastres (gold money).

Those who migrate in winter follow distinct occupations, by which they are known. The men of Jelu are carders of wool; those of Baz masons and workers in iron. During the winter they live either in the city of Mosul or in the Plain of Mosul, south of Amedia. Each village has a prescriptive right to occupy a given camping-ground year by year, and this right is always respected. The men of Tiyari do not migrate during the winter. The men of Deyr Aizé, a village in the Valley of Sât, near Oromar, follow a curious calling. Every winter the villagers proceed into Russia, disguised as priests, to solicit alms for the maintenance of their village shrine. The proceeds of the excursion are divided between the Bishop and the villagers. During my visit to the Hekkiari the Vali told me that the Government intended to take early measures for reducing the tribal Nestorians to subjection. To this end it has been decided to remove the seat of Government from Bashkala to Julamerick, eighteen hours to the south-west. This place has the advantage of being in close proximity to the Nestorian country, and within four hours' distance of Kochannes, the residence of Mar Shimoun. Otherwise it has little to recommend it. As at present known, Julamerick consists of a group of four small villages, which are situated in a funnel-shaped valley, watered by the River Zab, and surrounded by the mountains of Diz. The valley produces abundant crops of rice, but the practice of inundating the rice-fields has rendered the place so malarious, that hitherto the people have been unable to remain there during the summer.

If the Government contemplates the reduction of the tribes by force I anticipate that they will meet with a desperate resistance, for they are well armed, have great personal courage, and an intense hatred of the governing race. If conquered they will emigrate in large numbers to Russia. That country has established a great influence among the Nestorians, for, by encouraging emigration to Erivan and Tiflis in times past, she has created a present and tangible interest for the Nestorians within her own borders. There are four or five Nestorian villages in the Plain of Erivan, and every autumn great numbers of Nestorians pass through Van *en route* for Erivan, where they assist in the gathering of the harvest and communicate with old friends.

SKETCH MAP.

(62. 5/87. 1193) F.O. 524.

It is currently reported that, for purposes of economy, Hekkiari will shortly b reduced to the status of a sandjak, and reunited to the Vilayet of Van. In that case Mutessarif would reside at Julamerick (the new centre), and I see no reason why th Government should lose any of its efficiency by the change.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 16.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received April* 23.)

(No. 141.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, April 15, 1887.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 64 of the 19th February last, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting certain hard treatment of the Armenians at the hands of the local authorities under the late Vali of the Vilayet of Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 16.

Vice-Consul Barnham to Sir W. White.

(No. 5. Confidential.)
Sir,

Van, March 18, 1887.

FACTS have transpired since the death of the late Vali which fully confirm the Reports which I have from time to time addressed to your Excellency upon the severe treatment which the Armenians have received at the hands of the local authorities.

Among the papers of the deceased was found a series of daily police reports, detailing all visits interchanged between the military commander and the Consular body, and others giving the names of all Armenians who were entertained at or visited the Consulates, and of those to whom the Consuls paid visits.

One document shows to what length the late Vali would go in his efforts to inspire the Sultan with a distrust of foreign intrigue in Van. It will be in your Excellency's knowledge, from a perusal of the Reports of Captain Clayton, that there are in Van two rival Mussulman families, the Timoi Oghlor family, represented by Tahir Pasha, President of the Municipality, and the Dilaver Oghlor family, represented by Hassan Effendi, a member of the Court of Appeal. The late Vali espoused the cause of Tahir Pasha, and treated that of Hassan Effendi with open hostility. He sent a Report for submission to the Sultan to Bessim Bey, a Secretary at the Palace, announcing that Hassan Effendi and his friends were in correspondence with an Armenian Committee in Bitlis, and that this correspondence was forwarded to its destination by the foreign Consuls. The document referred to above is a despatch from the Minister of the Interior, reprimanding the Vali for sending this Report (and others) to the officials of the Palace instead of to his Departmental Chief. Another document conveyed the refusal of the Minister of the Interior to recommend the Vali's application for permission to exile Hassan Effendi and several Armenian Notables. This application had, in the first instance, been sent to the Palace.

A few days since I saw Aziz Bey, the President of the Court of Appeal, who told me that the accusation brought against the three Armenian lads,* who were in December last exiled to Nigdé, near Konia, was a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end; that he had told the Vali so to his face, but that the latter had retaliated by causing a "Mazbata" to be drawn up for signature, demanding his dismissal. Probably, no one here would hesitate to-day to endorse Aziz Bey's opinion. Perfectly innocent, these boys were sent to Nigdé in the depth of winter, suffered severely on the journey, as appears from letters received by their friends, and were, on their arrival at Nigdé, imprisoned until they had found bail. It would be an act of humanity if your Excellency could obtain permission for them to return home. Since the death of the Vali there has been a happier feeling among the people at large, and more freedom of intercourse between Mussulmans and Christians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

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* No. 27, December 23, 1886.

No. 17.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(No. 100.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, April 26, 1887.*

WITH reference to your despatch No. 141 of the 15th instant, I should be glad to be informed whether your Excellency has been able to take any steps on behalf of the unfortunate Armenian youths who were exiled in December last to Nigdé, near Konia, upon a charge which, from Mr. Barnham's despatch, would appear to be entirely false.

Your Excellency reported in your despatch No. 18, Confidential, of the 10th January, that you had deferred any action in the matter until you had obtained further information.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 18.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received May 14.)

(No. 170.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 10, 1887.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting the arrival of the new Vali, Khalil Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 18.

Vice-Consul Barnham to Sir W. White.

(No. 7.)
Sir, *Van, April 26, 1887.*

I HAVE the honour to report the arrival at Van, on the 21st instant, of his Excellency Khalil Pasha, the newly-appointed Governor-General of this vilayet.

Khalil Pasha is a man in the prime of life, of prepossessing appearance, and, for a Turk, exceptional educational attainments. He speaks French and Greek fluently, was, in 1871, Secretary of Legation at Rome, subsequently visited Paris and Vienna, has been Ottoman Consul-General at Pesth and Odessa, and was recently Mutessarif of Selliché, near Salonica. Such a career justifies the hope that he will promote the cause of education, the construction of good roads, and the much-needed navigation of Lake Van.

Alive to the past intrigues of two Mussulman factions in Van, he keeps aloof from both, and has chosen his residence in the Christian quarter, near to this Vice-Consulate. In former times, whenever the Vali of Van refused his countenance to the Tenair-Oghlou family, their policy was to discredit his administration by fomenting disturbances among the tribal Koords. This fact will render the new administration an interesting study.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 19.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received May 14.)

(No. 171. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 10, 1887.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout, reporting the biennial elections in the Administrative Council of the Lebanon and the illegal practices which are said to have taken place in connection with these elections.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 19.

Mr. Eyres to Sir W. White.

(No. 18. Confidential.)
Sir, *Beyrout, May 2, 1887.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for your Excellency's information, that the biennial elections for three seats in the Administrative Council of the Lebanon for the divisions of Jezzin, Shouf, and Batroun have lately taken place. In the two first-named districts the elections passed off quietly, but in the district of Batroun some disturbances have arisen. The two candidates for the post were Sheikh Kenan-el-Dahir and Sheikh Assaf-el-Bitar, both Maronites. The former was the Government candidate, and the latter was supported by the Maronite Bishop, Mgr. Freifer. The Governor-General of the Lebanon is somewhat jealous of the authority of the Maronite Bishops, particularly in the north of the Lebanon, where the Maronites are the great majority of the population.

In consequence of this feeling, Wassa Pasha became very anxious to secure the return of his candidate, and it is alleged that he caused pressure to be put on the electors, who are the Sheikhs of the villages. The result of the elections was, that Sheikh Kenan-el-Dahir was declared the victor by 46 votes to 37 given to his opponent. Immediately the Bishop's partizans, instigated by the Bishop himself, at least, so their opponents declare, sent a deputation to Wassa Pasha and the Consuls of the Powers to complain of illegal practices on the part of the Government. Wassa Pasha received them, asked them who they were, and on their declaring they were the delegates of the population at Batroun, demanded to see their papers authorizing them to act as delegates. They were unable to produce any; nevertheless the Pasha invited them to visit him at Baalbda, his official residence, and lay their complaints before him. They did so, and a Commission composed of two members of the Administrative Council, one a Maronite, Faris Effendi Khouri (who has always been noted for his opposition to the Governor-General of the Lebanon, and been reputed to be strongly attached to the French party), and the other a Greek Orthodox, Ibrahim Bey-el-Aswad, was sent to the spot to examine into the allegations of the complainants.

The Commission made its report after a few days, and declared that no traces of illegal practices could be discovered, that all the Sheikhs had been examined, and had all declared that they had voted freely and according to their conscience. A document was signed before the Commission by some fifty Sheikhs, complaining of the action of those persons who had appealed to the Pasha and the Consuls against the election.

On the result of the Commission of Inquiry becoming known, a body of Maronites, some 300 or 400 strong, came to Beyrout to lay further complaints against the Commission, to the effect that the Commissioners had refused to hear evidence, had forced some of the Sheikhs to sign by threats of imprisonment, and had absolutely declined to accept any declarations which told against the Government. On the arrival of these malcontents, Wassa Pasha refused to receive them at his town house, telling them that Baalbda was his official residence, and he would hear them there. On their insisting on being heard, his Excellency became frightened and lost his head. He sent for some 300 Turkish troops, which dispersed the crowd, and it is said that he himself came down with a revolver in each hand, and threatened to fire on them, but I am inclined to believe this report to be exaggerated. The same day, Saturday, the 30th ultimo, the malcontents appeared at the French Consulate, and stated their case to M. de Petiteville: while they were there an officer came, and summoned on the part of the Governor-General three of the principal persons to his Excellency's presence. The French Consul-General advised them to comply with the demand; this they did and were immediately sent to Baalbda, and imprisoned on the charge of exciting the populace and disturbing public order. The matter was still further complicated by an adherent of the Bishop's party having been set upon and dangerously wounded by a person who is stated to be a servant of Sheikh Kenan-el-Dahir, but who is still at large.

To-day a deputation came to this Consulate-General, and presented me with a Petition, copy of which I inclose, and with various documents, as evidence to support their contentions. These documents consist chiefly of affidavits on the part of seven Sheikhs, to the effect that, first persuasion, then threats, and in one case violence, were used to induce them to vote contrary to their desire. Of these seven, however, only two voted for the Government candidate. The deputation further complained, that Wassa Pasha acted illegally in refusing to allow the Mukhtars of those villages,

where for one cause or another there is temporarily no Sheikh, to vote. There are, I understand, at present seven villages without Sheikhs, the Mukhtars consequently acting in their place. Wassa Pasha held that, as the Mukhtars are not elected, but appointed by the Mudir of the district, they had no right to vote with the Sheikhs who are elected by the population; and it appears to me that he was perfectly justified in coming to this decision, as to allow officials appointed by Government to vote in the place of the Representatives of the people would be an infringement of the principle on which the Administrative Council is elected.

Thus far I have reported to your Excellency the plain facts of the case as they appear on the surface, but I venture to make some observations on the private history of the matter, so far as I have been able to acquaint myself with it.

I have been informed on good authority that the original cause of the whole affair was corrupt practice on the part of Kupelyan Effendi, Wassa Pasha's son-in-law. It is only too probable that he obtained from the Sheikh Kenan-el-Dahir a considerable sum of money in return for his promise of support. Kusselyan Effendi has unbounded influence with the Pasha, and it would not be difficult for him to persuade his Excellency that it was most important to defeat a candidate favoured by the Maronite Bishop, by working on the Pasha's known jealousy of Maronite influence. Kusselyan Effendi confessed to me that the Government officials in Batroun favoured the candidature of Sheikh Kenan-el-Dahir, but he absolutely denied violence or illegal pressure. It is difficult to discover the truth on this point, especially as there has been hard swearing on both sides; as an instance of which I have the honour to inclose herewith the declarations made by the same man, Sheikh Boula, one to the French Consulate, and one to the Kaimakam of Batroun. But I have no doubt that a great deal of moral pressure was employed during the elections, and that difficulties were placed in the way of those who wished to vote for Sheikh Assaf-el-Bitar. No proofs, however, have been adduced of positive violence during the elections, but I have learnt that the Commissioner, Faris Effendi, owned in private, that two of the Sheikhs who voted for Kenan-el-Dahir were coerced into doing so. Any such action on the part of the officials was doubtless due to orders issued by Kusselyan Effendi. The Commission of Inquiry was in all probability animated solely by the desire to find the Government officials guiltless of any illegal practices, several Sheikhs having declared that they were not allowed to make statements unfavourable to the Government, and were even placed under restraint until they gave their word not to do so.

My French colleague has intimated his intention of protesting very strongly against these proceedings (though he does not even profess to believe all the accusations made against the officials), and more especially against the action of Wassa Pasha in calling Turkish troops to his assistance, on the ground that the circumstances of the case did not justify the Governor-General of the Lebanon in availing himself of the aid of Turkish soldiers to settle matters connected with the mountain.

In conclusion, I venture to express my opinion that there was illegal pressure exercised by the officials during the elections, but that this pressure was not exercised in a sufficient number of cases to influence the result of the elections; that Wassa Pasha has shown, in this as in other cases, that he is entirely subject to the evil influence of his son-in-law, who may be considered responsible for the present disturbance, as he is for the maladministration of the Lebanon as a whole.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. C. A. EYRES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 19.

Affidavits of Sheikh Boula.

Au Consulat-Général de France.—Déposition du Cheik de Boula, Georges El-Khouri.

QUAND le Cheik se présenta devant la Commission, Ibrahim Bey El-Assoumi le fit asseoir et lui dit: "N'est-ce pas, nous sommes parents, pourquoi as tu voté pour Kenaan?" "Parce que j'y ai été forcé par le Moudir, le Caïmacam, et son fils." Le Bey s'est levé violemment, l'a traité de chien et a dit à un zaptié de l'emmener dans une chambre. Il est resté une heure dans cette chambre avec un zaptié à la porte. On l'a fait ensuite appeler; on l'a interrogé de nouveau; il a répondu de même; on l'a insulté et renvoyé chez lui avec ordre du Caïmacam de se rendre à Bzina chez le Moudir, qui n'y était pas. Le zaptié voulait l'emmener à Batroun; sur son refus il exhiba un ordre du Caïmacam; il dut donc se rendre forcément à Batroun. Là il a été amené à la prison directement. Il a été mis au secret pendant un jour et demi; après ce délai le gardien de la prison lui a apporté un écrit disant qu'il avait voté en toute liberté pour Kenaan, ajoutant que s'il ne le signait pas, il passerait toute sa vie en prison. Alors il a signé le papier ci-joint. Il a été relâché de suite. Samedi, 22 Avril.

Requête du Cheik Boula au Gouvernement Central par l'entremise du Caïmacam de Batroun:—

Le Soussigné, Georges Khouri Elias, Juge de Paix du village de Boula, a l'honneur de vous exposer ce qui suit:—

Les zaptiés m'ont mis en prison d'où j'ai adressé à son Excellence un télégramme par lequel je me plaignais que les deux Commissaires-Instructeurs m'ont menacé, insulté, et fait arrêter. Or, je suis pauvre, et en sortant de la séance de la Commission, quelques-uns m'ont trompé et fait écrire le susdit télégramme. On m'a doublement trompé en m'engageant à acheter et en me faisant dire que l'autorité m'a contraint de voter pour Cheik Kenaan. La vérité est que j'ai voté de mon plein gré, et que les deux Commissaires ne m'ont rien fait.

Je vous supplie en conséquence d'avoir pitié de moi et de me faire mettre en liberté.

(Signé) GEORGES EL-KHOURI,
Cheik du Village de Boula.

Le 22 Avril, 1887.

Inclosure 3 in No. 19.

Petition addressed to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul-General, Beyrout.

(Translation.)

THE elections of a member from our district for the Administrative Council in the Lebanon have not been carried on regularly, owing to the intervention of the local authorities, and to all sorts of pressure, threats, and intrigues used, contrary to the Regulations and the Orders of the Governor-General by the Kaimakam and the Mudirs, with the view of securing the election of Sheikh Kanan-el-Dahir, as it was reported to you in due time by telegrams and Petitions.

We beg now to present this our Petition by a deputation on our part in order to give you the strongest proofs that the elections were irregular, contrary to justice and to the Réglement Organique which is signed by the Great Power you represent, and, consequently, they are null and void.

We beg again to protest before you as Representative of Great Britain, and to declare that we do not accept Sheikh Kanan-el-Dahir to be our representative, for the reasons which will be submitted to you by our Deputies.

Sealed by 218 persons, Notables, and others, inhabitants of Batroun.

District of Batroun, April 1887.

No. 20.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(No. 123.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 19, 1887.

I HAVE read with much interest Mr. Bax Ironside's Report upon the question of the extension of the railway system in Asia Minor, which was inclosed in your Excellency's despatch No. 48, Commercial, of the 2nd ultimo, and I should be glad if you would convey to him my appreciation of the ability and industry shown in its preparation.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 21.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 185.) *Constantinople, May 28, 1887.*

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum to the effect that Nusret Pasha, Inspector of the 4th Army Corps, had summoned Hussein Pasha, Chief of the Kozlitchan Kizilbash Kurds, to Erzingan, and commenting on the probable effect of this order.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 21.

Acting Consul Devey to Sir W. White.

(No. 12.) *Erzeroum, May 4, 1887.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, according to unofficial statements made here, Nusret Pasha, Inspector of the 4th Army Corps, is insisting that Hussein Pasha, Prefect of the Caza of Kozlitchan, in Dersim Vilayet, and hereditary Chief of the Kozlitchan Kizilbash Kurds, should come to him at Erzingan, and that on Hussein Pasha's pretexting illness as an excuse for refusing, Nusret Pasha has threatened to bring him by force.

Hussein Beg-zade Hussein Pasha, of the family of Kozlitchan Chiefs, who in former times ever resisted Ottoman authority, became reconciled with the Government and was appointed Kaïmakam, with the title of Pasha, in 1881. This step lost him a considerable amount of popularity amongst his own people, but the Kozlitchanlis still regard him as the only person to whom any allegiance is due, and hitherto he has been able to maintain good relations with the Government, while his district has been commendably tranquil. Though his rule may be somewhat arbitrary and far from exemplary, it is certain that no other person appointed in his room would be able to collect taxes and maintain order, and would probably be either killed at once or driven away. Were any attempt to be made to bring Hussein Pasha to Erzingan against his will, it is possible that from 200 to 500 Kurds might collect for his rescue. It is therefore sincerely to be hoped on all grounds that no such measure will be undertaken.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

No. 22.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 2.)

(No. 207. Confidential.) *Therapia, June 17, 1887.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 171, Confidential, of the 10th May, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Beyrout, reporting on the proceedings of the French Consul with regard to the recent elections in the Lebanon.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 22.

Acting Consul-General Eyres to Sir W. White.

(No. 22. Confidential.) *Beyrout, June 1, 1887.*

Sir,

WITH reference to the events which occurred in the Lebanon reported in my despatch to your Excellency No. 18, Confidential, of the 2nd May, I have the honour to report further that the French Consul-General, M. de Petiteville, called on Wassa Pasha,

attended by two of his Dragomans, to demand satisfaction for the personal slight that he considered had been put upon him by the arrest of some of the Maronite Notables who had appealed to him for assistance.

The French Consul stated that while the deputation was at the French Consulate he was informed that Wassa Pasha had summoned some of the Notables to his presence, and that he advised them to comply with this summons immediately. Three of them were arrested outside the French Consulate, and three more shortly afterwards. He considered this an insult to the French flag and to himself personally. Wassa Pasha replied that M. de Petiteville was entirely mistaken; it was true that four Maronite Notables had been arrested, but they were not of those who had called on the French Consul, and that so far from being arrested outside the Consulate, they were arrested at a khan a mile distant. M. de Petiteville appealed to his Dragomans as witnesses, but they were obliged to confess they had not seen anything, they had only heard that such events had taken place.

Wassa Pasha's statements were, in fact, absolutely correct, and the French Consul had been misled. He consequently withdrew his demand for satisfaction, shifted his ground, and requested as a favour that the six prisoners should be released. The Pasha answered that the matter had now been referred to the Courts of Justice, and he was powerless.

M. de Petiteville continued to insist on this occasion, and also subsequently, that the prisoners should be released, but being unable to carry his point, he has suspended all friendly relations with his Excellency.

The prisoners, four in number (two having escaped), were condemned by the Court of First Instance at Batoum to a year's imprisonment for calumny and disturbance of public order. They have appealed to Baabda, and no doubt the sentence will be confirmed.

In view of the Report made by the Commission of Inquiry, Wassa Pasha is, I venture to say, undoubtedly in his right in acting thus, and there can be no question but that his authority would receive a serious blow if no notice were taken of the somewhat insolent demonstrations made against his Excellency.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. C. A. EYRES.

No. 23.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 30.)

(No. 247. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Therapia, July 26, 1887.

I REGRET to have to report to your Lordship that the information which reaches me from different parts of the Ottoman Empire all points to a deplorable increase of brigandage, even in districts where the civil authorities can if they choose command a considerable military force.

I have the honour to call particular attention to a Report by Mr. Acting Consul Wentislaw from Salonica No. 39 of the 15th instant, of which he has sent your Lordship a copy, and to one from Mr. Acting Consul Devey (Erzeroum] No. 18, Confidential, of the 27th June, accompanied by a Memorandum, of which copies are inclosed.

From my preceding Report of the 25th July, No. 246, your Lordship will have observed that a famous brigand, called Mindjan Oglou, in the Consular district of Trebizonde, who had been captured, had since been allowed to escape.

The causes of this are not far to seek: they are due probably to the growing demoralization of the officials, and to the filling of the higher provincial posts by incapables through Palace functionaries, evils to which unfortunately there is no prospect of a remedy.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 23.

Acting Consul Devey to Sir W. White.

(No. 18. Confidential.)

Erzeroum, June 27, 1887.

Sir,

I REGRET to have to draw your Excellency's attention to the recent shocking increase of crimes of violence, especially of robbery with violence, and of rape, in the immediate neighbourhood of this city; and indeed from almost every quarter of the vilayet one hears of the unsafeness of the roads and the increasing boldness of robbers. Inhabitants of this city assert that the number of outrages is quite exceptional this season, and complaints are more frequently raised of the inefficiency and corruptness of the Courts of Justice; a Turkish Agha of a neighbouring caza having been robbed of some valuable mules, after having futilely petitioned first the local and then the central authorities, being still unable to get any satisfaction whatever, finally sent his own men, who robbed the relations of those who had plundered him of animals to more than the value of what he had lost.

The Governor-General has also been of late severely blamed for his general apathy and *laissez-faire* in view of such outrages; and officers highly placed have expressed very strong opinions against his Excellency in private. I have further heard it stated that several merchants had forwarded by post a serious protest against the existing disorders to the Ministry of Interior, though they did not venture to use the telegraph, and that a written placard had been affixed in the market-place a day or two ago, but was immediately removed as soon as attention had been attracted to it.

His Excellency has been in ill-health for nearly a month chiefly owing to his scrupulous observance of the Ramazan fast, and partly perhaps to his advanced age, and he is now going to spend a few days at Ilidja, and hopes to benefit by the mineral waters of that place. About three months ago there was a report that the Porte was proposing to relive his Excellency with the pension that he has earned by fifty years' service. It is generally admitted that his retirement would be no great loss to the province, but some people think that, despite his fault of being or of making himself deaf and dumb to existing abuses rather than exert himself to remove them, his successor would as likely as not have all his vices with none of his virtues, of which personal uprightness is the most striking. Better King Log, they say, than King Stork. Were, however, this vilayet lucky enough to fall in with a Governor of such character as Hassan Bey (late Governor of Kharput), there is no doubt that the benefit both moral and material to this province would be immense. Kharput being but a vilayet of the third class and Erzeroum of the first, there is but very small hope of securing Hassan Bey's services for this province except in the remote future.

I have the honour to forward herewith a list of some of the chief outrages brought to my notice which have taken place lately, and to remain, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 23.

Memorandum of recent Outrages.

A BAND of ten or twelve brigands robbing and levying blackmail in the Passin plain. A few zaptiehs were sent from Hassankaleh to capture them, but as they were not strong enough to face the robbers, a further force of fifteen were sent from the city, but did not arrive till after the brigands had left. Captain Issa Effendi of Zevin met this party near that place, and a combat ensued in which the robbers lost two horses and one man, Mehmet. The Mudir of Azab, a Nahiyyé near Zevin, also sent out men against this party, and afterwards proceeding alone to join his men fell in with the robbers, who wounded him so severely that he has since died. In spite of the Government denial, there can be little doubt that this band was under the leadership of Kerim, the famous Russian brigand.

Robbery of a caravan of about fifty poor people going to Constantinople in search of work at the Tektap Dagh in Khanous Caza by eight or ten armed Kurds.

Kurds sheep-lifting at Kara Kilissa in the Bayazid district. Zaptiehs were sent after them, and two of the gendarmes were shot dead.

A Turkish Captain plundered and wounded, and a Persian camel caravan plundered close to Ilidja.

A party of Trebizond brigands came to Hovek, a village of Ispir, and left a quantity of contraband tobacco, saying that 1500*l.* must be ready on their return to pay for it. The villagers informed the authorities and asked for protection, but no attention was paid to their petition; on the miscreants return they resisted unaided.

At Tifnik bridge, 5 miles from this city, Lazzes, or people in Laz costume, plundering individuals and travellers on several occasions.

Near Akdagh, a village 12 miles on the north of the plain, several passers-by and the Tortoum fruit carriers stripped of all they had.

Seven person robbed on different occasions near Touzji, a village 5 miles south of this city.

An Armenian village, Notable killed at Karachoban Khanous by a Kurdish robber.

Eight or more muleteer horses carried off from within an hour's distance of the town.

Constant robberies, sometimes accompanied with wounding, on the Palantoken Mountain and Deré Boyun Pass.

A putrifying corpse found in a gully at Aghzi Achik, 3 miles from town, with bullet wound in the back.

Two men reported to be found dead with their throats cut on the Palantoken, just off the Mush road.

General unsafeness of Trebizond, Erzingan, and Mush roads during the last three months.

Violation (by night and forcible entry) of a woman of Sheikhnotz during her husband's absence. Convict condemned to three years' imprisonment.

Violation of two Armenian women of Toumdj, a village 8 miles distant, by Turks of the same village. Affair being inquired into, but Turks threatening the Christians for having dared to complain to the authorities.

Violation and murder with every species of barbarity of a Moslem girl of Tortoum. Malefactors not found.

It may be well to add here that punishment has but a minimum deterrent effect. Imprisonment is regarded but as a trifling inconvenience; a man meets his friends or makes new ones, and on his release he has lost nothing in the eyes of the world, even after ten years of convict life. Hard labour exists only on paper. Were the punishments of the bastinado for crimes of brutality and death for murder revived, there might be a decrease in such outrages as the above.

No. 24.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 30.)

(No. 250. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Therapia, July 26, 1887.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 185 of the 23rd May, I have the honour to inclose copies of three further despatches I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum as to the complaints of the inhabitants of Kozlitchan against Hussein Pasha, and the eviction of twenty-five Armenian families from their homes. In Mr. Devey's last despatch he reports that these latter have returned to their homes pending an inquiry.

I instructed Sir A. Sandison to bring to the notice of the Minister for Foreign Affairs the substance of the complaints against Hussein Pasha. From the inclosed Memorandum, your Lordship will see that his Excellency stated that the matters complained of must go before the competent Tribunals and be settled in that manner, but at the same time, he stated that Hussein Pasha enjoyed his personal confidence as well as that of the Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 24.

Acting Consul Devey to Sir W. White.

(No. 15. Confidential.)

Erzeroum, June 15, 1887.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency, in continuation of my despatch No. 12 of the 4th ultimo, that though no further attempt has been made to induce Hussein Pasha of Kozlitchan to go to Erzingan, a series of intrigues was set on foot some time ago against him in the chief town of the sandjak. Some families of Kozlitchan were brought to Erzingan, and declared they had suffered much from the Kaïmakam's injustice and oppression, and several long telegrams of complaint were dispatched to the Porte begging that he might be dismissed. It appears that the chief of the clique who desire to compass Hussein Pasha's overthrow is the President of the Criminal Court of First Instance, Hadji Mehemet Bey, son of Hadji Ali Bey, and of the most notable family in Erzingan. Hussein Pasha is, I believe, not over-confident of his position, and is about to send his harem to Erzeroum to be out of harm's way. The Central Government of Erzeroum are, however, I understand, less ill-disposed towards Hussein Pasha than the Local Government of Erzingan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 24.

Acting Consul Devey to Sir W. White.

(No. 17. Confidential.)

Erzeroum, June 18, 1887.

Sir,

IN connection with my despatches Nos. 12 and 15, I have the honour to state that the recent complaints against the Kaïmakam of Kozlitchan were more serious than I was at first led to believe. As many as 100 families of Kozlitchan, declaring they could no longer support Hussein Pasha's oppressive exactions, quitted the Dersim Vilayet and came to Erzingan, whence a deputation of their chief men was dispatched to Constantinople. At Erzingan the refugees were kindly received, and assigned lands in the neighbourhood of the Bagur Dagh apparently; but it is extremely probable that these people would never have left their homes had they not been promised countenance and support from Erzingan. It is now said that Hussein Pasha is doing his best to keep the parts of this vilayet occupied by the Dersim refugees in a state of disorder, and that he is encouraging acts of brigandage and turbulence, with the double object of drawing the odium of the authorities upon the refugees, and of proving at the same time that the Government is powerless to shield them from his wrath.

There is yet another matter in respect of which Hussein Pasha has been brought into conflict with the people of this vilayet. Some twenty-five families of an Armenian village in the Terdjan Caza of this sandjak were very recently, according to their statements and Petition, forcibly ejected from their homes by Kozlitchan Kurds. Hussein Pasha has declared, in reply, that the lands of the village in question had been purchased by him, and that he holds the title-deeds, and is ready to prove his claims before a Court of Justice; and I understand that these papers are to be examined at Mamakhatoun.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 24.

Acting Consul Devey to Sir W. White.

(No. 20.)

Erzeroum, July 12, 1887.

Sir,

WITH respect to the concluding paragraph of my despatch No. 17, Confidential, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the evicted inhabitants of Khatchkeui have returned to their village, accompanied by a few zaptiehs to protect them, pending the inquiry at Mamakhatoun.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 4 in No. 24.

Memorandum from Sir A. Sandison.

(Confidential.)

I HAVE the honour to report that, in obedience to your Excellency's instructions, I brought to Saïd Pasha's notice, unofficially, the substance of Mr. Devey's despatches respecting Hussein Pasha, the Prefect of the district of Kozlitchan.

His Excellency stated, in reply, that besides being personally acquainted with Hussein Pasha, he had received the most favourable accounts of the Prefect's administration during his tour of inspection in Armenia with Baker Pasha. His Excellency then went on to say that though Hussein Pasha was very popular throughout the district of Kozlitchan, he was rather distasteful to the Armenians, who appeared to have some particular object in wishing for his removal.

With regard to the deputation mentioned by Mr. Devey as having been sent to Constantinople, Saïd Pasha said that he had heard nothing yet on the subject, but that should the deputation present itself to the Porte, the Minister of the Interior would no doubt inquire into the complaints they may have to bring forward against Hussein Pasha.

I did not fail to mention also to Saïd Pasha the case of the twenty-five Armenian families represented to have been forcibly ejected from their homes by Kozlitchan Kurds. His Excellency considered that the question was one which purely concerned the competent Tribunals, and that the law would therefore have to take its course in the matter.

Therapia, July 22, 1887.

No. 25.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 13.)

(No. 250. Confidential.)

Therapia, August 5, 1887.

My Lord,

THE accompanying copy of a despatch (No. 30, Confidential), and received by me from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout, gives details of the extent to which administrative corruption has spread even to what was once the model province of the Lebanon.

I have reason to believe that Mr. Consul-General Eldridge's deplorable account of what is going on there with the connivance of his Excellency the Governor by his son-in-law is but too true, as I have a confirmation of it from other equally reliable sources, but, unfortunately, it is a state of things spreading and increasing everywhere in this Empire, and I do not see my way to do any good by making any representations on the subject to the Sublime Porte, or any inclination on the part of any of the other Ambassadors to take that line.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 25.

Consul-General Eldridge to Sir W. White.

(No. 30. Confidential.)

Aleih, July 23, 1887.

Sir,

PREVIOUSLY to my departure on leave of absence last year, I had the honour to report more than once on certain irregularities and abuses which had crept into the administration of Mount Lebanon, and I have the honour respectfully to call your Excellency's attention to the corruption which now openly goes on, and on which Mr. Acting Consul-General Eyres reported in his despatches No. 51, Confidential, of the 26th October of last year, and No. 18, Confidential, of the 2nd May last.

Since my return to Syria, I have seen many influential inhabitants of the Lebanon both in and out of the service, who all complain bitterly of the system of extortion exercised by the son-in-law of Wassa Pasha, Kyoetian Effendi, with whom

some assert his Excellency shares the spoils, but I have not as yet been able to verify this, so will express no opinion for the present on that part of the question.

There is, however, no doubt about the proceedings of Kupelian Effendi, who carries on his system openly and with impunity; no official appointments are made until he has been satisfied, and when an opportunity offers, and there are two or more candidates for the same post, he openly bargains with them, and finally appoints the highest bidder. In a place near me, the post of Mudir, or Petty Governor, recently fell vacant, and was sought for by two of the inhabitants of the same village, both wealthy, cousins and rivals whom Kupelian played off against each other until he succeeded in obtaining 150*l.* from one (fortunately the best of the two), whom he at once caused the Pasha to appoint. This I know to be a fact, as I had the story from the successful candidate, whom I have known personally from adolescence.

The mother of Nessib Bey Jumblatt, who was appointed Kaimakam of the Shouf, three or four years ago, stated to me that the appointment has cost her son upwards of 4,000*l.*, and that he was selling property, which she and I had saved in years gone by out of the wreck of their vast estates, in order to satify the cupidity of Kupelian.

This lady is the most influential person in the southern part of the Lebanon, and I cannot do better than quote her own words to me with regard to the affairs of the family: "You found, on your arrival in Syria, our house in ruins, me a widow with two minor sons. You took our affairs in hand, and in ten years rebuilt our house, which now Kupelian is fast ruining. Do save us from that man, and from his father-in-law, Wassa Pasha," who, she positively asserted, took his share. This lady, who is well advanced in years, and I believe a great-great-grandmother, came a journey of ten hours to confide to me her troubles.

I will mention only one more case of gross extortion out of the many I have heard during the short interval elapsed since my return. An inhabitant of the Mountain obtained from the Civil Court a decision in his favour with regard to some disputed land. In order to render this decision or sentence executive, it requires the confirmation of the Governor-General. Of this document Kupelian obtained possession, and kept it for several months, until he had extracted as much as he could (upwards of 100*l.*) out of the successful suitor before he submitted the sentence to the Pasha for homologation.

I will not multiply these instances as I might do, but state generally that there is one howl of dissatisfaction against this harpy from one end of the Lebanon to the other, and the population would hail his departure with acclamations.

Wassa Pasha is not a man of a strong or decided character, though I believe he is animated with excellent motives, which would soon appear were his ruling and evil genius replaced by an honest and well-principled man, as I believe his Excellency, provided he is not implicated in the nefarious transactions of his son-in-law, would then become popular, though not so much as his predecessor Rustem Pasha, who was a man of a very decided character, great straightforwardness, and honesty of purpose, and those who intrigued against him in 1882-83 would gladly welcome him back. Through his own want of character and decision Wassa Pasha is entirely ruled and guided by Kupelian, who by his proceedings drags the name of his Chief through the mud, so that his Excellency is not only not respected as he should be, but his name is treated with contempt by the populations over whom he rules as being an instrument in the hands of his son-in-law, upon whose action his Excellency does not appear to exercise any supervision or control, but who is allowed to follow his own sweet will and fill his capacious pockets at the expense of the country.

As it is my intention, with your Excellency's permission, to make a short tour through certain districts of the Mountain in order to judge for myself on the spot, I have the honour to request that you will consider this as a preliminary report, to be followed by a more comprehensive one on the actual state of the Lebanon from personal observation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. JACKSON ELDRIDGE.

No. 26.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 27.)

(No. 277.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 18, 1887.*

HAVING received from certain Notables of Batroun an Address complaining of the way in which the elections had been carried on in the Lebanon, and of the conduct of Wassa Pasha, the Vali, I forwarded it to Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout.

Mr. Eldridge has now sent me a Report on this subject, copy of which is herewith inclosed, from which your Lordship will perceive that Mr. Eldridge is of opinion that the complaints are not supported by fact, but are rather prompted by personal jealousies.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Consul-General Eldridge to Sir W. White.

Sir, *Aleih, August 2, 1887.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 7th ultimo, transmitting to me a letter from some Notables of Batroun complaining of the action of his Excellency Wassa Pasha in connection with the elections in the Lebanon, and instructing me to give an opinion as to the statements contained in that document.

Without reference to previous correspondence on this matter, I will endeavour to give my impressions from inquiries I made before and after the receipt of your despatch, but in order to make my remarks comprehensible, I must refer to certain past events.

The Maronite Bishop Freyfer is a man of considerable influence in the northern part of the mountain; he is, and has ever been one of the most active in endeavouring to sustain the power of the Maronite clergy in opposition to the Governors of the Lebanon, who, this party consider, ought to submit themselves to their dictation.

This Bishop was the instigator of an attempted personal assault on Rustem Pasha at Ehden a few years ago, by a party of Maronite monks, who called on his Excellency under the pretence of paying their respects to him, but who carried concealed under their long monastic frocks heavy bludgeons, which at a given signal they (some 25 or 30 stalwart men) produced and rushed at his Excellency. He had only with him his usual attendants and a small escort of the Lebanon gendarmerie outside the house which was called in by the Aides-de-camp, and they, using their arms freely, after a severe struggle (in which the Pasha took an active part, showing great courage) succeeded in overpowering the monks and in arresting most of them.

From that time the Bishop was the open and declared enemy of the Governor-General.

Wassa Pasha soon after his arrival made the acquaintance of the Bishop, and from his insinuating manners and undoubted capacity (for intrigue) induced his Excellency to consider him one of his best and most sincere friends, capable of being of great service to him. Wassa Pasha expressed to me his satisfaction at this and his surprise that his predecessor could not appreciate such an excellent man, of whom he asked my opinion, which, without entering into details of the past, I gave, to the effect that Freyfer was well known as a dangerous intriguer, and that sooner or later he would abuse the confidence placed in him, and cautioning the Pasha to be on his guard in his relation with him. His Excellency told me a few days ago when calling on me that he now bitterly repents not having followed my advice.

To return to the question of the elections in general. It is a well-known fact, of which I hardly need to remind your Excellency, that in all countries governed under Constitutions—and the "Règlement du Liban" may almost be considered as a Constitution—that the Government *de facto* is always anxious to secure the election as members of representative bodies of candidates who are known to be in favour of their rule, and to exclude those who are notoriously hostile to it. This principle extends in a very limited degree to the Lebanon. As a general rule I have found that the elections of members of the Administrative Council, since it was first established, have been fairly

and impartially conducted, without any undue influence on the part of the authorities, whereas the Maronite clergy do not scruple to take advantage of their ecclesiastical power by threats of excommunication, &c., to use pressure over the population when they want to secure the election of their own candidates.

Occasions have arisen in which it has been absolutely necessary that the Governor should interfere in these elections; I know of several instances, but will only trouble your Excellency with one: Shortly after the arrival of Rustem Pasha (I forget the year) it was necessary to elect a Druse member of the Administrative Council, and I learnt to my horror and disgust, that a certain Mustapha Dweik, for whose connection with the events of 1860 I have the honour to refer you to the Blue Book on the "Affairs of Syria, 1860-61," pp. 308 and 311, by which you will perceive he was condemned to death, was put forward as the candidate. I therefore considered it my duty to inform Rustem Pasha of the antecedents of this man, of which his Excellency was ignorant, and whose election would have caused great dissatisfaction, not only amongst the Christians, but also amongst the Druses themselves, and might have led to troubles even.

His Excellency listened to my representations and remonstrances, and although the man was at that time already elected, of which fact we were not aware, the election was annulled. Could this be considered a case of undue influence? though no doubt had Mustapha Dweik been a Maronite, supported by a powerful clergy, a great outcry would have been raised; as it was, few beyond those immediately concerned knew anything of this incident.

The recent case of Batroun was as follows: The Bishop Freyfer asked, in confidence, some time (two or three months) before the time of the election, Wassa Pasha, whom he could wish to have chosen as member of the Administrative Council, and his Excellency named the Sheikh Renan-el-Dahir, whom the Bishop promised to support by all his influence, on which promise his Excellency relied; but subsequently to this understanding and before the election, the Bishop applied for certain favours for some of his adherents as the price of his support of the Government candidate; but these favours were not granted from some (to me) unknown cause.

In consequence of this the Bishop, in revenge, started as a rival candidate to the Sheikh Renan, Sheikh Assaf-el-Bitar, a mere instrument of the Maronite clergy, well known for his hostilities to the Government, in whose behalf, besides using his own personal influence, the Bishop appears to have invoked the aid of my French colleague, whose experience in Syria is comparatively short.

The election in consequence became a severely-contested one, and Wassa Pasha was, in my opinion, compelled, in order to maintain his prestige, to support his own candidate by every legitimate means in his power. I cannot, however, discover that he used undue influence or pressure or was guilty of any violation of the existing "Réglement."

The letter or Petition, herewith returned, on which you do me the honour to ask my opinion, I should be (to use an Americanism) inclined to pronounce "bogus." I have had it examined by experts, and find whole groups of the signatures, to the number of fifty together, are all in the same handwriting, which would not be the case had it really been signed and sealed by Notables of the country, as, thanks to the spread of education, there is no one in the Lebanon who has any pretension to be a Notable who cannot read and write at least his own name.

Most of the seals, too, are doubtful, as they are of the same size and form, engraved in the same style. I draw attention to this fact as it is customary in Syria for those who are engaged in the profession of agitator or intriguer to have ready on hand a number of these seals, which cost a mere trifle, so that for a few shillings he is set up with a stock-in-trade sufficient to produce any number of Petitions duly signed and sealed.

Amongst the seals affixed to the documents only a very small percentage are those of men who are known, and even these may be forged.

As for complaints of violation of the "Réglement," I consider them as frivolous and vexatious, and do not believe the petitioners could sustain them before an impartial Court of Inquiry. The principal accusation is one of attempted assassination, which turns out to be a simple ordinary quarrel between two men of rival families. The complainant refused to give details or the name of his assailant when invited to do so before the competent Tribunal.

The agitators placed themselves entirely in the wrong when they conducted to lay out a mob consisting (as they admit) of more than 500 persons of the lower orders to endeavour by this means to overawe Wassa Pasha and the Consuls-General of the

Great Powers. This conduct I consider most unjustifiable, and the action of the authorities in dispersing the mob, arresting and punishing the ringleaders of this attempt to disturb public order and tranquillity, is worthy of praise instead of censure, as had the movement not been checked at once it might have led to further and serious consequences.

I can express no opinion as to the measure of punishment to which the guilty parties in this attempt at revolt have been condemned, as that must depend on the laws of the country.

As the action of my French colleague was reported by Mr. Acting Consul-General Eyres in his despatch No. 22 of the 1st June, I leave it without any further comment, as at that time I was not on the spot.

In conclusion, I venture respectfully to draw your Excellency's attention to the last paragraph of the translation of the document under consideration, which clearly indicates the source from which it emanates and for whom it was intended.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. JACKSON ELDRIDGE.

No. 27.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 8.)

(No. 323. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 28, 1887.

WITH reference to my despatch to your Lordship No. 250, Confidential, of the 26th July last, inclosing copies of despatches from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, respecting the complaints of the inhabitants of Kozitchan against Hussein Pasha, I have the honour to inclose copy of a further despatch from Mr. Devey, No. 24, Confidential, of the 8th instant, in which he reports that Hussein Pasha has been acquitted of the misdeeds of which he was accused.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 27.

Acting Consul Devey to Sir W. White.

(No. 24. Confidential.)
Sir. *Erzeroum, September* 8, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 26th July, inclosing the copy of a Memorandum on the subject of the charges brought against Hussein Pasha of Kozitchan, and to inform you that he has been acquitted of these charges, and that a Mazbata in his favour has been signed by the Dersim Idaréi Medjliss and forwarded to Constantinople.

Our Diarbekir Agent some time ago sent me the following information respecting Hussein Pasha: It appears, he says, that certain Chiefs of the Balaban Ashiret (tribe) are Hussein Bey's kinsmen, but for personal reasons his antagonists. The Balabans are under the immediate authority of Erzingan, but at the instigation of the Chiefs above mentioned they every now and again petitioned the Government at Erzingan and Erzeroum against Hussein Bey, and once even went to Constantinople to lay their grievances before the central Government, and Mr. Boyajian's informant believes actually obtained an order for his banishment, which, however, remained without effect. The Erzeroum Vali, and Nafiz Pasha, late Mushir of the 4th Army Corps, always favoured and sheltered Hussein Bey, and he was therefore never called to account for his misdeeds. But when Hedayat Pasha replaced Nafiz Pasha as Mushir, the complaints, at the instigation of certain persons of influence, were renewed, not so much for the purpose of punishing the culprit as for that of squeezing him.

Mr. Boyajian speaks anything but favourably of Hussein Bey's character, and says it is believed that he has enriched himself at the expense of both the public and the Treasury, but is of opinion that, should his antagonists be successful in their object, viz., that of supplanting Hussein Pasha by one of themselves, the change would be decidedly for the worse.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

No. 28.

Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received November 7.*)

(No. 500. Secret.)

My Lord, *Cairo, October 29, 1887.*

I RECEIVED lately a visit from a certain Mustafa Bey Aali, who introduced himself to me as the son of Beder Khan Pasha, late hereditary Chief of the Bohtan district of Kurdistan, who died some twenty years ago in exile at Damascus, after the subjugation of his country and the confiscation of his estates by Sultan Abdul Medjid in 1844.

In conversation with Mustafa Bey I gathered that his object in visiting Cairo from Syria, where he is supposed to be residing, was to obtain my intervention in presenting to Her Majesty's Government certain proposals and projects for the future of Kurdistan, whereby that country was to be delivered from the oppressive exercise of Turkish government, as now administered, and restored to the enjoyment of a certain degree of autonomy under the ancient hereditary Chiefs.

Mustafa Bey's language in speaking against Ottoman rule as exercised in Kurdistan was of a very violent nature, and he assured me that his feelings on this subject were shared by the whole Kurdish and Armenian population of the country.

On leaving he handed me a voluminous letter addressed to Her Majesty, setting forth at length the claims of his family, the state of affairs in Kurdistan, and the manner in which it is hoped English interference may be exercised for the benefit of that country and for the introduction of long-expected reforms. I have had a précis made of this letter, and have the honour to transmit it to your Lordship herewith.

From subsequent inquiries I have little doubt that Mustafa Bey is really, as he asserts, the eldest son of Beder Khan.

I understand that he is a man of great influence in Kurdistan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) E. BARING.

Inclosure in No. 28.

Précis of a Letter addressed to Her Majesty the Queen of England and Empress of India, left with Sir E. Baring by Mustafa Bey Aali.

MUSTAFA BEY AALI, now living *incognito* at Cairo, but supposed to be in exile at Damascus, is the eldest son of Beder Khan Pasha, the last Deré Beyi of Bohtan and the old Beylik of Kurdistan, who was subjugated, after considerable resistance, by the Ottoman Porte in the reign of Abdul Medjid, in 1844. The position of Beder Khan Pasha in Kurdistan, where his ancestors had for many generations been hereditary tribal Chiefs, was one of theoretical subjection to, but real independence of, the Porte, he being the last holder of the hereditary rank of Deré Beyi, or Valley-Prince, the grade formerly assigned to the Rulers of Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, &c.

After his conquest by Abdul Medjid, Beder Khan Pasha was exiled to Crete with a considerable pension from the Porte, all his family property in Kurdistan being confiscated. He resided some years in Crete, was then recalled to Constantinople, and ultimately died in 1868 at Damascus.

Mustafa Aali particularizes at considerable length the career of himself and of his brothers, he being employed in several high posts by the Ottoman Government (*e.g.*, Accountant-General of Evkaf at Janina, Sub-Governor in the districts of Widdin, Adana, and Iskenderoun), while to his brothers various degrees of military rank were given, most of them receiving the grade of Imperial Aide-de-camp, ostensibly in consideration of their high birth, but really to attach them to Turkish interests.

The family experienced various changes of fortune of late years; two of the brothers, after raising troops in aid of the Porte at the time of the last war with Russia, despairing of pushing their fortunes in Turkey, determined to raise a revolt and endeavour to regain some of their former power in Kurdistan. They were received with open arms by the Kurds, but eventually yielded to the promises of the Porte, and, after a few slight engagements with the Imperial troops, threw up the enterprise, and again accepted the Sultan's supremacy.

Mustafa Aali's main contention is that, by the Treaty of Berlin, the condition of the Kurds was to be greatly improved. This engagement has not been fulfilled, the Kurds are to the last degree discontented, are continually sending messengers to Mustafa Bey and his brothers, urging them to strike a blow to recover their freedom, and promising that all the tribes will rise instantly to do their utmost to throw off the Turkish rule. He adduces numerous instances to prove the great influence and undiminished authority among the Kurds which his family still possess, and avers that, even unsupported, the Kurds, under the lead of one of the old stock of Princes, could easily attain the semi-independence aimed at. He and his family, however, far from encouraging this widespread spirit of rebellion among their countrymen, do their best, desirous as they are to avoid ruin and bloodshed, to impress on them the necessity of patience, with the assurance that England will not long delay the fulfilment of the conditions of the Treaty of Berlin, and the improvement of the position of the Kurds.

The summary of his proposal, to which he devotes much argument, is that if the British Government will use their influence with the Porte to obtain the concession of semi-independence and autonomy to Kurdistan, the Kurds will be ready to pay a certain tribute, and furnish troops to the Porte as their Suzerain, and at the same time will take a Treaty engagement, with the Porte's consent, to aid England with 100,000 troops, horse and foot, in case of any war with Russia which should imperil our position in India.

He declares that both he and his people are perfectly prepared to await the pleasure of the English Government, if some hope of ultimate success can be granted them—without which hope the long-suffering of the great Kurdish tribes becomes more and more endangered—and finally states that if this grave appeal of an entire people, and their hereditary Prince, is deemed worthy of attention by Her Majesty's Government, he is prepared to proceed to London personally to state fully the claims and complaints of the Kurds, and justify his own pretensions.

No. 29.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(No. 264. Secret.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, November 10, 1887.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General in Cairo,* reporting a visit he had received from Mustafa Bey Aali, the son of Beder Khan Pasha, late hereditary Chief of the Bohtan district of Kurdistan, and inclosing a précis of a letter to the Queen which the Bey handed to him.

I shall be glad to receive your Excellency's observations on these communications from Mustafa Bey, which you will perceive are made with the object of obtaining the intervention of Her Majesty's Government for the introduction of reforms in Kurdistan, and for a return to the former system of partial autonomy under hereditary Chiefs.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

P.S.—I inclose also, for your Excellency's information, a copy of the reply which I have addressed to Sir E. Baring.†

S.

No. 30.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Baring.

(No. 320. Secret.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, November 11, 1887.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 500, Secret, of the 29th ultimo, reporting a visit which had been made to you by Mustafa Bey Aali, son of the former hereditary Chief of Kurdistan, with a view to obtaining the assistance of Her Majesty's Government for the introduction of reforms in that country, and for a return there to the former system of partial autonomy under hereditary Governors.

I have requested the opinion of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on

* No. 28.

† See No. 30.

Mustafa Bey's communication, but it is clear that his proposals are not such as could be entertained by Her Majesty's Government under present circumstances; and in case he should make any further application to you, you must be careful not to encourage any expectation of their being accepted in their entirety, though you may state that Her Majesty's Government are anxious to do what is in their power to induce the Porte to introduce reforms in the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 31.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 19.)

(No. 355.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 9, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copies of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout, the one on the subject of the general progress which has taken place during the last twenty years in the material prosperity of the Lebanon, the other relating to the state of corruption existing in the administration of the country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 31.

Consul-General Eldridge to Sir W. White.

(No. 41.)
Sir, *Aleih, October* 20, 1887.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 40 of the 2nd ultimo, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I returned to Aleih from my tour in the south of the Lebanon on the 16th ultimo, having visited Deir-el-Kamar, Bteddin (where I was the guest of Wassa Pasha during three days), and several other places, making Mukhtara, the family residence of the Druse Kaïmakam, my head-quarters for the time being; I should have reported earlier on my proceedings had I not been disabled by an incident I met with during the journey.

The progress and prosperity of the inhabitants of the Lebanon during the last few years, and the general sense of security visible everywhere, were most remarkable, and would greatly strike any one who knew the country thirty years ago. I cannot but attribute these favourable results, which form a marked contrast with the outlying districts of the Province of Syria, to the beneficial application of the "Règlement Organique," which has now been in force since the year 1861, with a few modifications in 1864. In every village I visited or passed through more commodious dwellings have been built or are in the course of construction; and I have been informed by friends who have known well the country longer than I have, and who have (after a long absence) recently been to other districts of the Mountain to which I did not go, that the same signs of prosperity and progress are visible in every part of the country visited by them during an extended tour of some weeks.

One of the most noticeable features, however, in the prosperity of the Mountain is the progress which has been made in the construction of good roads.

When, about thirty years ago, the French Company commenced the construction of the carriage-road between Beyrout and Damascus, their plan was to have made their midway station at the important town of Zahleh, in Mount Lebanon, but the inhabitants of that place, guided by their priesthood, so obstinately opposed the carrying out of this scheme that the Company had to construct their half-way house or establishment on a piece of low-lying marshy ground in the plain now called Shtora, and, as a matter of fact, so great at that time was the opposition of the inhabitants of the country to serviceable carriage-roads that this important line of communication between the port and capital of Syria had, out of consideration to the fanatical opposition of the inhabitants of the country, to be constructed in such a way as to avoid all towns and villages, the inhabitants of which now perceive how much their interests have suffered in consequence, and I am told that the people of Zahleh

are now fully convinced of the error they committed, and are willing to make large sacrifices to induce the Company to carry out the original plan of making their town the central station.

Shortly before my arrival in Syria (June 1863) Daoud Pasha (the first Governor-General of the Lebanon under the "Règlement") sent a party of engineers to Ghazir, in the Kesrawan, to survey and make plans for a carriage-road from that important centre to Beyrout, but they were driven out of the place by the inhabitants, who declared that they wanted none of their roads.

At the time of my arrival I was furnished with several hundred copies of a pamphlet in Arabic, by Sir Henry Layard, pointing out the advantages of good roads in mountainous countries, and which I distributed liberally throughout the country with little or no effect.

Daoud Pasha also made a few abortive attempts to construct roads in the vicinity of Bteddin, which only led to a large and useless expenditure.

The chief cause of the opposition of the inhabitants of the Lebanon to the construction of good carriage-roads was the belief inspired by their Chiefs, clerical and lay, that, in case of any disturbances arising in the future requiring the intervention of troops, it would be an easy matter to introduce by those roads artillery into any part of the Mountain, by which means their former state of semi-independence would be destroyed; but thanks to the regular Government which was established under the "Règlement" of 1861, which has now maintained order during the last twenty-six years, this idea has exploded.

The real utility of roads has only begun to be appreciated since the year 1868, when I selected as a summer residence the village from which I write, and to which I have ever since resorted; in that year I induced Franco Pasha to connect it with the Damascus road by a short carriage-road of about a mile in length, which was greatly opposed by the inhabitants, who insisted that the road was only being constructed for my convenience and to their ruin. At that time Aleih was one of the most wretched, poverty-stricken villages in the Lebanon, and, except mere peasants' huts, there were only two habitable houses in the place, belonging to the Sheikhs, one of which I hired, and induced my then Italian colleague, M. Maccio, to take the other. Now numerous handsome houses have been erected, 175 respectable families from Beyrout and elsewhere have passed the present summer here, where there are five good hotels, and at least six public carriages, each capable of containing five persons, to descend every morning to Beyrout, returning in the evening, to say nothing of the numerous private carriages which are continually running to and from that town.

Of course this progress has been gradual; but after two or three years from 1868 the inhabitants of adjacent villages, perceiving the advantages of good roads from the example offered to them by Aleih, began to petition for the construction of other carriage-roads in prolongation of this one, which was gradually done by extending the roads from village to village, which soon began to reap similar benefits. Other roads were also made in various directions at the request of the inhabitants, so that now there exist in the Lebanon about 220 kilom. of good serviceable carriage-roads, of which 148 kilom. have been constructed since the arrival of Wassa Pasha in 1883, whereas twenty years previously there did not exist a single metre except the Damascus road, which traverses the [?], and was opened to traffic in 1863.

His Excellency the Governor-General is at present overwhelmed with Petitions from the inhabitants of almost all the districts of the Lebanon for roads towards the construction of which they willingly contribute in labour and money, while the Government furnishes powder for blasting, and constructs such bridges and culverts ("travaux d'art") as may be required according to the surveys of the Government engineer.

Such are a few of the results of the peace and security which the Lebanon has enjoyed, and still enjoys, under the "Règlement," which I have witnessed with my own eyes, and I believe the progress would have been greater had it not been for the opposition of the Maronite clergy, who have always intrigued to get into their own hands the supreme power, and also for the constant impediments caused by the interference of the Valis of Syria in the affairs of the Lebanon, of which all the Governors-General from Daoud Pasha have complained, as I have from time to time reported to your Excellency's predecessors; but there is no doubt in my mind that the immovability of the Governor-General under the "Règlement," who cannot be changed without the consent of the Powers and their approbation to the appointment of a successor, has been one of the great safeguards of the tranquillity and prosperity

of the Lebanon, and consequently the cause of the general progress, which is at present remarkable.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. JACKSON ELDRIDGE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 31.

Consul-General Eldridge to Sir W. White.

(No. 42. Confidential.)

Aleih, October 24, 1887.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 30, Confidential, of the 23rd July last, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that from what I gathered during my recent visit to Bteddin and other places in the south of the Lebanon (reported in my despatch No. 41 of the 20th instant), the state of corruption previously reported by me is more than corroborated, and matters are worse than I anticipated.

The facts with regard to the cupidity and extortion of Kupelian Effendi are more than confirmed, though I could obtain no evidence implicating the Governor-General in the practices of his son-in-law, of which he appears to be ignorant.

I heard the most serious complaints connected with the proceedings of Kupelian Effendi, who, owing to the lack of firmness of character in Wassa Pasha, is allowed to interfere in everything, and may be said to govern irresponsibly the Lebanon greatly to his own advantage, as nothing escapes him; he dismisses officials and replaces them by others, and revises the sentences of the Tribunals, both civil and criminal.

I have just heard that the Cadi or Druse Judge of the Shouf, Sheikh Saïd Take-eddin, who is well known for his capacity, knowledge, experience, and integrity, and for which qualities he is highly respected throughout the Lebanon, has been recently dismissed from his post for some (to me) unknown reason, and replaced by Saïd Bey Neked, who does not possess a single one of the qualities of his predecessor, except, perhaps, integrity, and this remains to be seen. This unexpected change has astonished all the Mountain equally with myself, and is the subject of general discussion, all attributing it to the intrigues of Kupelian Effendi from interested motives on his part. I have personally known the two men for more than twenty years, and the opinion I express above of their characters is based on the conviction of long experience. Daily numerous letters are addressed to me by the leading members of the Druse community, protesting against this change, so prejudicial to their interests, as well as generally to all the inhabitants of the Shouf.

During my short stay at Bteddin many previous instances of a similar nature were brought to my knowledge by the superior employés of the Central Administration, with whom I have been on friendly terms for many years.

I could furnish a long list of these transactions, but abstain from troubling your Excellency with all the wearisome details. I am quite convinced, however, of the extent to which this corruption extends, and to which an immediate stop ought to be put by the dismissal of Kupelian, whose proceedings are not only the subject of bazaar gossip, but are discussed freely by all the functionaries of the Government on the spot, and sometimes within ear-shot of himself; not unfrequently he finds affixed to the door of his office a notice in some such terms as follows: "The post of —— is to be disposed of. For terms, &c., apply within."

While at Bteddin I more than once attempted to approach the subject of these abuses with Wassa Pasha, but his Excellency always turned the conversation to some other matter. I believe his Excellency would be rather pleased to be debarrassed of this incubus of a son-in-law, but there are family considerations which prevent him from taking a decided step himself.

Everbody speaks with a certain amount of respect for Wassa Pasha, but all deplore his want of firmness of character and tact shown by his relying so much on his surroundings, which is becoming more and more apparent. On these defects I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 32 of the 10th October, 1884; and certainly his Excellency has not improved in this respect, though I believe him to be animated in his actions by a sense of honour and justice, and were he under the influence of less dishonourable and dishonest men, he would, I have no doubt, carry on the administration of the Lebanon more to the satisfaction and advantage of the population.

During my journey to the southern districts my attention was also directed to the abuses consequent on the opposition of the Maronite clergy and others to the

carrying out of plans of public utility, and to the interference of the Valis of Syria in Lebanon affairs, both of which subjects have been reported on by me on former occasions to your Excellency's predecessors.

There has never been a doubt that the constant meddling of the Valis of Syria in the affairs of the Mountain, which they consider ought to form a district of their province, is suggested to them from high quarters, jealous of the success of a system of administration originating from the European Powers; to prove my assertion I have the honour to inclose copy of an intercepted letter on this subject recently addressed by Ahmet Pasha Shemaa of Damascus to the well-known Druse intriguer Ali Bey Hamadi, one of those most seriously implicated in the massacres of Deir-el-Kamar and Hasbeya; I attach considerable importance to this document, from the fact that Ahmet Pasha is well known to be be in frequent correspondence with the Palace at Constantinople.

Ali Bey Hamadi and his friends are therefore greatly encouraged in carrying on their intrigues, which have for primary object the dismissal of the present Kaïmakam of the Shouf, Nessib Bey Jumblatt, who is accused of being a partizan of the English policy in Syria, whatever that may be. In explanation of this it is hardly necessary for me to repeat that, on my first arrival in Syria, I was *ex officio* guardian to the Jumblatt family, and did my best to educate Nessib Bey, who was then a child, but I always endeavoured to impress on him that, although Her Majesty's Government took an interest in his family, he must always consider himself as an Ottoman subject.

About three or four years ago Wassa Pasha, in the exercise of his powers and discretion, decided to dismiss the former Kaïmakam of the Shouf, the Emir Mustapha Russlau, and replace him by Nessib Bey Jumblatt, and, as I reported at the time, I in no way contributed to or used any influence in this change, and since my advice to him has been fidelity towards his own Government, obedience to his chiefs, and to perform his duties with impartial justice to the various tribes and religious sects which were placed under his rule, and I believe he has followed my advice. The real object of the intrigue is to force Wassa Pasha to dismiss Nessib Bey, in order to reinstate the Emir Mustapha in his former post as Ali Bey, and the small party who follow his lead are well known as staunch partizans of the Emir Mustapha, from whom they have in former times enjoyed favours, and hope for some more on his reintegration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. JACKSON ELDRIDGE.

Inclosure 3 in No. 31.

Ahmed Pasha Shemaa to Ali Bey Hamadi.

Monsieur,

Damas, le 11 *Ramazan*, 1304.

J'AI eu le plaisir de recevoir votre aimable lettre, pour laquelle je vous remercie beaucoup.

J'ai eu une longue conversation avec son Excellence le Vali au sujet des affaires qui se passent et que vous m'avez rapportées. Son Excellence m'a informé que lorsqu'il était à Beyrouth vous lui avez exposé tout ce qu'il faut à ce sujet, et qu'il vient maintenant de recevoir aussi une pétition concernant le même sujet. Son Excellence a donné alors beaucoup de conseils au Gouverneur du Liban. Il vient aussi d'écrire à la Sublime Porte d'une manière à produire son effet tout en transmettant la pétition. Soyez tranquille.

Vous n'ignorez pas aussi que j'ai une mission secrète de la part du Mebyne (Palais) ayant pour objet de donner des renseignements authentiques, exempts de tout m nsonge. Si vous m'envoyez des renseignements vrais, oculaires, sous votre cachet, je garderai cela comme gage, et à mon tour je rapporterai tout sous mon cachet au Palais Impérial, de manière à ce que Sa Haute Majesté le Sultan le voie et le lise en personne.

C'est une chose confidentielle et un secret bien gardé entre nous; gardez-le bien et déchirez ma présente lettre après l'avoir lue de peur qu'elle ne tombe entre les mains de quelqu'un.

Pardon d'avoir été bref.

Votre dévoué, &c.
(Signé) AHMED SHEMAA.

No. 32.

Sir E. Baring to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 19.)

(No. 551. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Cairo, December* 7, 1887.

MUSTAFA BEY AALI called on me this morning, and asked me whether I could communicate anything to him as to the views of Her Majesty's Government in respect to the proposals described in my despatch to your Lordship No. 500 of the 29th October. I spoke to him in the sense of the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's despatch No. 320 of the 11th November.

I should add that at my first interview with Mustafa Bey Aali I had, on my own responsibility, adopted language very similar to that employed in your Lordship's despatch.

Mustafa Bey Aali informed me that, under the circumstances which I explained to him, he intended shortly to leave Egypt; but that he had not yet decided whether to go to Constantinople or to Syria.

I have, &c.

(Signed) E. BARING.